

# A · SHORT · HISTORY · OF · RUSSIA

A · R · EPHIMENKO



TRANSLATED BY  
HERBERT · MOORE

★ A book is a journey ★



RAYMOND H. FISHER





A SHORT HISTORY OF RUSSIA



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# A SHORT HISTORY OF RUSSIA

FOR PUBLIC, ELEMENTARY, AND URBAN  
SCHOOLS, AND FOR JUNIOR CLASSES OF  
MIDDLE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

BY

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PETROGRAD, 1912

TRANSLATED BY

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## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

My reasons for offering an addition to the histories of Russia already published are these. This history is written by a Russian Professor of History, and therefore may be expected to show the events and movements which in the opinion of Russians themselves have been most important in the expansion, development, or retardation of progress, of the country, and in bringing Russia to be what she is to-day. We can only understand what Russia is at the present, or what she may be in the future, by understanding what she was in the past. It is brief, giving an outline which may be filled up from the numerous volumes dealing with special periods or subjects—the reign of Ivan IV. or Peter I., commerce, government, religion, or land, relations with England or the Far East, and so on; many of the existing histories are either so long that one “cannot see the wood for the trees,” or so compressed that it is difficult to take in all their closely packed information. Further, it gives

the history of Russia alone, with only the barest allusions to incidents in Europe generally, which often break the thread of the narration in existing works. The perfect historian is not of this world, any more than the king-philosopher or philosopher-king for whom Plato sighed, and for whose appearance the student of Russian history longs at the close of each chapter; for the "personal equation" can never be eliminated. M. Ephimenko writes from the point of view of one who sees the factors which make for the stability of a nation, and wishes to guide his young readers, not to seek for violent expedients by which they may fancy that evil will suddenly be uprooted and happiness and prosperity introduced, but to appreciate all that is good in existing arrangements, and the causes which hinder their better working, and to improve them, each one doing his best for the beloved Fatherland, and leaving that which is perfect to be brought about through the slow process of evolution.

I have added a few notes, where explanation or expansion seemed necessary, and my readers have to thank Mr. W. F. Reddaway, Censor of Fitzwilliam Hall, Cambridge, for revising these, as well as my translation, and for supplying a bibliography, which is published separately by

the S.P.C.K.<sup>1</sup> In transliteration I have generally followed Mr. Nevill Forbes, except where names, such as Dnieper, Paul, are so familiar that it would seem pedantic to write Dnyeper, Pavlo. I have tried to render the Russian in such a way as to keep the atmosphere and naïveté of the original, without too slavish an adherence to Russian idioms; and I have been so bold as to add an Appendix, bringing the history up to date, in the spirit and style of the author, so far as I have been able to imbibe it in the course of my work.

HERBERT MOORE.

ACTON, NANTWICH,

*January, 1920.*

<sup>1</sup> Helps for Students, No. 25.



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# A SHORT HISTORY OF RUSSIA

## PART I THE KIEFF PERIOD

### CHAPTER I

#### THE ORIGIN OF THE RUSSIAN DOMINION

1. WHO LIVED IN THE LAND OF RUSSIA BEFORE THE SLAVS.—We are Russians, citizens of the Russian State. Our State has not been in existence very long; a little more than a thousand years ago there was no such thing. The people of Russia at that time were not called Russians, but Slavs,<sup>1</sup> and even they were newcomers into our land. Until they came, various other peoples lived here. In the northern half of the land of

<sup>1</sup> The Slavs (from *slava*, "glory"?) are an Aryan race; we read of their being driven northwards from the Danube in Trajan's time. In the sixth century they are in the Carpathians, and join the Scythians in attacking the Roman Empire, later moving east and north-east. The Russians are thus a mixture of Slav and Finn elements, with a slight addition, as we shall see, of Tartar blood and characteristics. The combination gave the people the same hardiness that that of Saxons and Normans has given to us.

Russia—*i.e.*, in “Great Russia,”<sup>1</sup>—even now there is a great deal of forest; in those days thick forest was almost continuous. Here lived, before the Slavs, timid and peaceful Finns; remnants of them are still to be found in some places—Chuchonsti, Lopars, Korels, Votyaks,<sup>2</sup> etc. In South Russia, the present “Little Russia,” or Ukrainia, the forest passes into steppe; the farther south we go, the more bare of trees we find the steppe. In this steppe, at that distant time, no one lived a settled life, in town or village, on one spot. Various peoples, akin to the Tartars, wandered from place to place with their flocks, living a nomad life. These nomads advanced into the South Russian steppe from the vast steppes of Asia; they did not plough the land, but lived on the milk and meat from their flocks. They harassed those of their neighbours who were living a settled life, robbing them of their property, carrying off people and compelling them to work for them as slaves, or selling them like cattle into foreign lands. Various other peoples lived in the land of Russia. For in-

<sup>1</sup> “Great Russia” is the name given to the central and northern parts of the country; its population is about 42,000,000. Of “White Russians” (so called, probably, from the sheepskins they wore), in the west, there are about 4,000,000; “Little Russians” (Part III., Chapter IV.), 18,000,000. The history of Russia is the story of the rise of the “Great Russians” among the Slav peoples, and their absorption of the neighbour peoples and territories.

<sup>2</sup> The Southern Finns were known as the “blue-eyed Chudes” (“strangers”); about half a million are found in the province of Kazan. The Lopars and Korels are in the Kem district, by the White Sea; the Votyaks, or Vodes, in the Viatka basin.

stance, we may mention the savage Lithuanians, who lived in the wooded and marshy West Russia, now inhabited by the White Russians.

2. HOW THE RUSSIAN SLAVS LIVED.—The food, clothing, and tools of our Slav ancestors were scanty and poor, as usual with savages. For all that, they knew not only how to catch fish and wild animals, but also how to plough the land. They settled by preference beside forests with water. When the Slavs entered the Russian plain, they settled here and there upon the greater rivers; the Dnieper and its tributaries, the right bank of the Pripet, the left of the Desna, and also on the West Dvina, and the lakes of the north. On the banks of these rivers and lakes our ancestors established their villages. Here they lived in families: this means that all blood relations, whether closely or distantly connected, lived together; and not only lived, but worked together, hunted and ploughed the land together, and supported one another. All obeyed one tribesman, the oldest patriarch, as the "father of the family." In a word, each "family" lived on terms as close and friendly as those of a household to-day. Moreover all dead members, especially the oldest—grandfathers and great-grandfathers—were revered as divinities; prayers and sacrifices were offered to them. Those families which lived near to one another anywhere on the bank of a single river or lake together formed a tribe. Thus on the Middle Dnieper lived the tribe of



Polyans, on the Pripet the Drevlyans, on the Desna the Syevers, on the Western Dvina the Krivichi,<sup>1</sup> on Lake Ilmen the Slavs of Novgorod.

The families of each tribe helped one another by mutual protection from aliens and enemies, who could otherwise invade them from one quarter or another, and pillage the whole country. As a protection against these enemies, each tribe had an enclosed place, or "gorod,"<sup>2</sup> sometimes more than one. In case of a hostile invasion, the people took refuge behind the thick timber walls of the "gorods." Here also, in this strongly enclosed place, the people of the different families assembled, to talk together, or for purposes of trade. Trade was carried on by exchange; if a man had more than he needed of anything, he exchanged it for something of which he had not enough. The Polyans had their "gorod" of Kieff, and the Slavs of Lake Ilmen, Novgorod.<sup>3</sup>

Life in the families and tribes was uncomfortable and dangerous. One family would quarrel with another over land or hunting-grounds; there was no one to arbitrate upon the dispute, and each one put into practice his own ideas of judgment and justice. People robbed

<sup>1</sup> The Krivichi still live round Smolensk; the others, except the Polyans or Poles, have been absorbed.

<sup>2</sup> Here is the origin of the word "gorod," later meaning a "town" or "city" (Petrograd—"Peter's city," Novgorod—"New City," etc). It is akin to our "garth," "garden."

<sup>3</sup> Not to be confused with Nijni ("Lower") Novgorod, west of Moscow.



and plundered, even killed one another, in revenge for an offence received. To add to these troubles, foreign enemies would fall upon the Slavs, and there was no superior power to trouble about protecting them. The nomads of the steppes allowed no rest to all the Slav tribes living in South Russia—the Pólyans, the Drevlyans, and the Syevers; while Varyags (Normans)<sup>1</sup> sailed across from beyond the Baltic Sea, and fell upon the inhabitants of North Russia, the tribe of Krivichi, and the people of Novgorod. These Varyags were pirates, preying upon the sea and the sea-coasts; they were daring fighters and seamen, and had better weapons and boats than the Slavs. They made their way up the rivers falling into the Baltic Sea, into the very heart of Russia. Their attacks fell especially upon the Slavs of Novgorod, whom they reduced to subjection, and compelled to pay tribute.

3. FIRST STEPS TO A DOMINION.—Whether they would or no, it became inevitable for the Slavs to consider how to organize a power to give them order and protection. The first of all the Slavs to devise a plan were the people of Novgorod. They sent to the Varyags beyond the sea, with the request to provide them with princes,<sup>2</sup> to be their judges and rulers. So Prince Rurik sailed across from beyond the

<sup>1</sup> "Varyags"—Vikings, Varangers, Norsemen.

<sup>2</sup> Russian "Knyaz," akin to Scandinavian "Koning," the leader of a troop, generally (mis)rendered "Duke."

sea,<sup>1</sup> with his brothers, and all his tribe of Russ (hence came the word "Russian").<sup>2</sup> The newly arrived Varyags settled on the territory of Novgorod, to govern it, to judge it, and to protect it. Thus the Russian State had its beginning. The event took place in A.D. 862.

4. THE GREAT PRINCIPALITY OF KIEFF.—The venerable Nestor,<sup>3</sup> a monk of the Kieff-Pecherski Monastery, gives us an account in his "Annals" of the call of Rurik, and of the other Russian princes who succeeded him. When Rurik died, his kinsman Oleg governed the State, during the minority of his son Igor. Oleg was a daring and enterprising man. He was not content to stay in the cold and rough territory of Novgorod; he was attracted by the warm and fertile south. With his soldiers and the Prince's son Igor, Oleg crossed from the northern waters to the Dnieper, and descended the river upon Kieff.<sup>4</sup> High above

<sup>1</sup> The story probably means, that Rurik (Norse, = Roderick), head of one of the many Northern tribes moving across Russia in arms for purposes of trade, made himself master of Novgorod, where he was welcomed by a colony of his kinsfolk. The descendants of the Knyaz were the Princes, or "Dukes"; the indigenous conquered peoples paid taxes, while the conquerors became a military and commercial caste, and paid none—a system continuing throughout Russian history.

<sup>2</sup> The name only came into use in the seventeenth century. Another explanation is, that the armed merchant conquerors were called Drujina (§ 7) or Rusi, a term which came to be applied to the whole people.

<sup>3</sup> Born 1056; died 1114. His name is given to the annals compiled by several writers.

<sup>4</sup> Kieff was the natural centre for trade with Byzantium (Constantinople), and also of resistance to Eastern invaders.

the lovely broad stream the walls of the town proudly stood, encircled by forests. Not far from the town the Desna and the Pripet fall into the Dnieper; once in occupation of Kieff, it would be easy to subdue all the tribes on the Dnieper and its tributaries. So Oleg seized Kieff, and from Kieff, all the Dnieper basin. Thus a great State was formed, into which came other tribes of Russian Slavs from both north and south. Kieff was made the capital, and the State itself came to be called the Grand Principality of Kieff.

5. HOW THE FIRST PRINCES RULED.—But the Grand Prince of Kieff bore but slight resemblance to the lords of to-day. He had but two duties: to give judgment and justice, and to protect the settlers from enemies, especially from the nomads of the steppes. Everything else the people managed for themselves; they assembled in Schodka<sup>1</sup> (Council) in their own town, and decided what should be done, and who should do it. In return for his trouble in giving judgment and protection, the Grand Prince

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Two other Norsemen, Askold and Dir, are said to have seized Kieff before Oleg, who slew them by treachery. Oleg further advanced upon Byzantium, where the Greeks had to buy him off; the text of two treaties with him is preserved by Nestor. He "hung his shield on the gates of Byzantium" in 911; an action which the Russians have regarded as a prophecy of their possession, at some time, of Constantinople.

<sup>1</sup> "Schod" means "coming together." The "village assemblies" continue to this day. "Council" is "Vyet-che," "deliberation."

levied tribute, which the people paid, not in money, but in everything they possessed which seemed good to the Grand Prince. The greater part of the tribute came in white furs, of martens and other animals. To collect the tribute the first Princes themselves visited the lands of their subjects with a guard of soldiers. In the course of these visitations it often happened that the people caused some offence, and had to be punished for it. Hence arose trouble. See what happened to Igor,<sup>1</sup> who ruled the Grand Principality of Kieff in succession to Oleg, when he went to collect tribute from the Drevlyan tribesmen. He passed through their land, and collected what was due to him. But on the return journey to Kieff an idea occurred to him: the amount collected seemed small, and might well be increased. So Igor went back again. The Drevlyans were furious at such arbitrary conduct on the part of the Prince. A special meeting of the assembly was called: "The Wolf," they argued, "has got to know the way to the sheepfold; he will come again, until he has worried all the sheep to death." And they killed the Prince.

6. THE GRAND PRINCESS OLGA AND THE DREVLYANS.—The matter did not end with the death of Igor. The people of those days considered that it was a binding duty to avenge a

<sup>1</sup> Igor also made two expeditions against Byzantium, in the first of which he was beaten off by the "Greek fire," which burnt his ships; in the second he compelled the Greeks to make a treaty, and pay him money.

murdered man; otherwise he would have no rest in the other world. The revenge had to be taken by the nearest relatives; by brother for brother, by son for father. But Igor's only son, Svyatoslaff,<sup>1</sup> was still a child. However, Olga, the widow of Igor, was a clever and daring woman; she took upon herself to avenge her husband.

The Drevlyans were afraid of the people of Kieff, and to bring about a reconciliation, they sent the best men of their country to Kieff, to ask Olga to marry their prince. Olga ordered the envoys to be put to death. Then she advanced with her army upon the Drevlyans, and commanded that a lofty tumulus should be raised over her husband's remains, and arranged for prayers in honour of his spirit. When the Drevlyans, whom Olga's servants heartily entertained with good cheer, were quite drunk, she ordered them also to be put to death. After that Olga began the war. The Drevlyans shut themselves up in their towns. With very great difficulty, the Kieff army took their chief town. Part of the population was killed, part given as slaves<sup>2</sup> to the people of Kieff; upon the rest a heavy tribute was imposed.

7. THE GRAND PRINCE SVYATOSLAFF AND HIS DRUJINA (COMRADES).—The chief care of the

<sup>1</sup> This is a Slavonic, not a Norse, name. The invaders are beginning to be absorbed.

<sup>2</sup> Thus a class of slaves working on the land along with the peasants was introduced, with the natural tendency to reduce the latter to the condition of the former under the despotic hands of the boyars.



Grand Prince of Kieff was to defend his State from enemies, especially from the nomads of the steppes. To do this, it was essential that he should have soldiers—"comrades." The whole power of the Prince lay in his comrades. Strong and daring men entered the service of the Prince—men of capacity in matters of war. Experienced soldiers were highly valued by the Prince; he spent his days in the company of the eldest comrades, entering into their carouses and diversions, and sharing their joys and sorrows. Even from foreign countries stalwarts came to join the Prince's comrades, and took themselves off again at their own good pleasure. They did not consider themselves to be dependents or subjects of the Prince, but his junior colleagues, so to speak. The troopers attached themselves with special readiness to a prince who delighted in war with distant countries. Such a man was Svyatoslaff, son of the unfortunate Igor and his wife Olga—a very darling of the comrades. As soon as he was grown up, he started with his comrades upon warlike campaigns at a distance. He sought in all directions for glory and booty for himself and his comrades, striking terror into the hearts of his neighbours. Svyatoslaff lived just like the simplest of his band. He did not carry a tent with him, but slept upon the earth, with his saddle for pillow; when on a campaign he had not even a kettle in which to boil his meat, but cut thin slices of flesh, from a horse or other animal, and grilled it upon the

embers. He never made an attack unawares, but always sent word to his enemies, "I am coming to you." Svyatoslaff was particularly attracted westwards, to the Danube; where lived the Bulgarians, who were as much a Slav people as the Russians. He was so greatly enamoured of the Bulgarian territory, that he was ready to abandon his own native Kieff, and stay there for good. But the Greek neighbours of the Bulgarians were far stronger than the Prince of Kieff, and forced Svyatoslaff and his troopers out of Bulgaria. He won glory and booty it is true, but for all that he had to get back to his own Kieff. The troopers loved a prince like him, but the people of Kieff had no affection for him, because he left them without protection. While Svyatoslaff was on his way home from Bulgaria to Kieff, the nomads of the steppe lay in wait for him, and fell upon him unawares, and cut him and his comrades to pieces.

A band of comrades was necessary to the princes, even in times of peace. Its oldest members were given the title of "boyars";<sup>1</sup> the boyars were sent out by the prince to collect the tribute from the people, and in his name executed judgment and government. The prince did nothing without consultation (*sovyet*) with his boyars; the consultative assembly was called the Boyarskaya Duma,<sup>2</sup> or "Council of Boyars."

<sup>1</sup> A Tartar word, meaning "exalted."

<sup>2</sup> Duma—"place for thinking." In later reigns edicts were issued in the name of "the Tsar and the Boyars."



## CHAPTER II

## RUSSIA CHRISTIAN

1. THE RUSSIAN SLAVS AS PAGANS.—More than a hundred years had passed since the foundation of the Russian State, but all the Russians were still pagans. They prayed to their ancestors and offered sacrifices to them. Besides this, they revered as gods all sorts of natural phenomena. The sun and the earth, the sky, thunder and lightning, the wind—all these they regarded as powerful gods, whose favour must be asked by prayer and sacrifice. And all Nature appeared to them to be alive. A forest, a single tree, a river, a lake, a mountain, or a stone—in all these lived, as our ancestors supposed, separate spirits, good or bad. Hence came all those house-goblins, river-nymphs, were-wolves, etc., in which our peasants believe to this day. In honour of some gods, more terrible and powerful than the others, idols were erected, and to these idols they offered in sacrifice animals, or even people. Thus the son of Svyatoslaff, Vladimir, set up an idol with silver head and golden beard, in honour of Perun,<sup>1</sup> the god of thunder and lightning.

2. FIRST ACQUAINTANCE WITH CHRISTIANITY.—In the neighbourhood of the Grand Principality

<sup>1</sup> Just as the house-goblins still have their place in the minds of the people, so Perun's powers have now been transferred to the prophet Elijah.

of Kieff was a State in which civilized people dwelt; that State was Greece. The dominions of the Greek (Byzantine) Empire surrounded the Black Sea; the Russians put out upon the Black Sea from the Dnieper, and navigated its waters so often, that the sea was actually called the "Russian Sea." The Byzantine Greeks were not only Christians, but also the most enlightened people of the time. Constantinople, the Greek capital, our ancestors called "Tsargrad." The Russians were greatly impressed with this city: its beauty, its wealth, its greatness, its marble palaces, its bazaars, in which was exposed merchandise from every corner of the civilized world; its sumptuous temples, in which the Greeks assembled for prayer to the One God. The Greeks readily traded with our ancestors; they took from them furs, slaves, honey, and wax (from the wild bees of the forests); the princes exported to the Greeks the articles which they received as tribute. In exchange the Greeks sold to the Russians silken fabrics for rich festal robes, all sorts of ornaments, and wine. The relations of our ancestors with the Greeks were not confined to trade; sometimes they went to war with them. All the early Russian princes undertook campaigns against the Greeks; sometimes successfully, like Oleg, sometimes unsuccessfully, like Igor.

3. VLADIMIR AND THE ACCEPTANCE OF CHRISTIANITY.—As they came continually into closer and closer contact with the Greeks, the Russians

became acquainted also with the Christian faith. Some of the people of Kieff began to accept it; there were a fair number of Christians among the Prince's comrades.<sup>1</sup> Last of all, the Grand Princess Olga accepted Christianity. But Olga could not induce her son Svyatoslaff to become a Christian. Christianity only predominated over paganism in the time of the son of Svyatoslaff, St. Vladimir. Our annals thus tell the story of how the Russian people became Christian.

There were residing at Kieff, on commercial business, people from various countries and of various beliefs. They approached the hospitable Grand Prince, and each commended his own faith, urging Vladimir to adopt it. Vladimir called together a conference of the elders of the town, and of his boyars. They counselled the Prince to send ten wise men to the countries professing the various faiths, so as to see each faith at work in its own place. On their return they spoke with delight of what they had seen in Greece: "When the Greeks brought us into the place where they worship God, we did not know whether we were in heaven or on earth." It was resolved by the general assembly<sup>2</sup> of the Prince, boyars and elders, to adopt Christianity from the Greeks—that is to say, the Orthodox faith. But Vladimir was not disposed to make

<sup>1</sup> There seems to be no ground for the statement that "a nation was baptized to order."

<sup>2</sup> Sovyet.

any request to the Greeks. He despatched an army against them, and reduced the Greek city of Cherson (Chersonnesus), in the Krimea. Then he sent to the Emperors (at that time there were two of them) at Byzantium, asking for their sister Anna in marriage. They answered that they could not give their sister to a pagan. Then the Grand Prince of Kieff deposed that he was ready to be baptized; so he was baptized, and his marriage with the Greek Princess was solemnized. When Vladimir returned to Kieff, with priests, ikons,<sup>1</sup> and Church books, the people of Kieff were baptized too. This took place in the year 988.

4. WHAT CHRISTIANITY BROUGHT TO RUSSIA.—The people of Kieff had been baptized, but the rest of the populace of the Grand Principality of Kieff were not made Christians at one stroke. Paganism held its ground firmly; the farther from Kieff, the more firmly. In dark places, far from large towns and trade routes, the people still remained pagan, long after the year 988.

With the new faith came new life. The people themselves began to be changed. While Vladimir Svyatoslavitch<sup>2</sup> remained a pagan, he was just

<sup>1</sup> Plaques, usually of some gold-coloured material, wood or metal, bearing the figure of a saint, the face at least being brightly painted; hung on the screen separating the sanctuary from the nave of an Orthodox Greek Church (hence called "ikononostasis"), or on the walls of private houses or public places. They are made in enormous numbers in the Vladimir district.

<sup>2</sup> The termination "-vitch" added to a proper name means "son of"; "-evna" = "daughter of."

such a warlike prince as his father had been before him. Moreover, he had generally been a cruel man; he went to war with his own brothers, and even killed one of them, took by force the daughter of the Prince of Polotski, Rognyed, to be his wife, and offered human sacrifices to the gods. But when Vladimir accepted Christianity he was altogether a changed man. He no longer invaded foreign countries for the sake of plunder, but busied himself only with such operations as were necessary to defend his own principality against the onslaughts of nomads. He even shrank from executing robbers. On festival days he gave feasts, inviting all who wished to come; and to old and sick folks, who could not come, he distributed food and drink all over the city. For his goodness the people called him "The Beautiful Little Sun," and the Orthodox Church honours him as a saint.

Christianity further brought with itself into Russia a written language and writing. The Russians while pagans were absolutely ignorant of writing, and managed without it. But when they became Christians they had to have prayer-books and church books generally. The Greek clergy brought books with them; but the Greek language of these books was not understood. Fortunately for the Russians, the Bulgarians also had previously become Christians; and two Greek scholars, St. Cyril and St. Methodius, had devised an alphabet for them, and translated



into their language some Greek Church-books. And as the Bulgar tongue also is Slavonic, it consequently resembles the Russian; indeed, it is our so-called "Church-Slavonic" language. Thus the Russians obtained an alphabet, and with it a written literature. Now it became possible to translate any book from a foreign language into the Russian tongue, to learn from civilized people all that they knew. The Russians imitated the Greeks in establishing monasteries;<sup>1</sup> the monks were the civilized people of the age. Printed books were as yet unknown, and the literary labours of the monks consisted in making translations from the Greek and copying books. Much was done for the enlightenment of the Russian people by the monastery at Kieff-Pecherski. "Pecherski" means "A Cave-dweller"; the first monks lived in caves, excavated by themselves, in the high bank of the Dnieper round Kieff. The first superiors of this monastery, Antony and Theodosius, are honoured by the Orthodox Church, and by all the Russian people, as saintly ascetics.

5. YAROSLAFF THE WISE, AND THE RUSSIAN CODE.—One more new and important benefit came into Russia with Christianity. The Russians learnt that in every Christian State all

<sup>1</sup> In the twelfth century, 41 monasteries were erected; in the thirteenth, 22; in the fourteenth, 80; in the fifteenth, 70. Measures were taken to deal with their growing wealth and power by Peter I., Ivan III., and Peter III.; finally, Ekaterina (Catharine) II. brought them completely under State control.

its subjects have to obey law. But the people can only keep the law when they know what it is; therefore the law must be committed to writing. This also was done in the time of the successor of Vladimir, Yaroslaff. He gathered together, and committed to writing, the law which his subjects had to observe. This first collection of the laws of our State is called the "Russian Code."<sup>1</sup> Yaroslaff did not himself devise these laws. He incorporated in the Russian Code all that was already practised in the lives of the people, all that the Russians themselves acknowledged as good and right. But some changes were made—changes for the better. For example, the Russians considered it good when a murdered man's relatives avenged his death by killing the murderer; but by the Russian Code murder in revenge was forbidden, and compensation to the relatives was imposed upon the murderer.<sup>2</sup>

Yaroslaff Vladimirovitch loved to busy himself with study, and gathered together educated people, to translate books from the Greek into the Slavonic tongue, and to copy them. For all this he was commonly called "Yaroslaff the Wise."

<sup>1</sup> "Russkaya Pravda." It shows the Russian people divided into three social classes; (1) Drujina or boyars, the descendants of the Northern conquerors and those allowed to join their ranks; (2) freemen—traders and agriculturists; (3) slaves—captives, and insolvent debtors, compelled to render service upon the land in default of money. These slaves are the subject of many of its articles; much of the wealth of Kieff was derived from slaves.

<sup>2</sup> For the murder of a boyar, 80 grivnas (about a pound's weight of silver); of a freeman, 40; of a woman, 20.



## CHAPTER III

THE DIVISION OF THE GRAND PRINCIPALITY OF  
KIEFF INTO APPANAGES

I. HOW YAROSLAFF DIVIDED HIS DOMINION.—Yaroslaſſ the Wiſe died A.D. 1054. He left ſeveral ſons, for whom ſome provision had to be made. According to the ideas of theſe times, a prince could not be without land; to each ſon ſeparate land had to be given, to be ruled by him and to maintain him. Yaroslaſſ's eldeſt ſon, Izyaslaſſ, received as his inheritance the land and city of Kieff, and was regarded as the head of the princely family—that is, of all the other princes. The reſt was divided among the other ſons.

When the eldeſt brother, the Grand Prince of Kieff, died, his place was taken by the ſecond brother, who gave up his own land to the third, while the fourth replaced the third. This arrangement was inconvenient for princes and people alike. Before a prince had time to ſettle down in his own territory, he had to leave it for another. Before the people had time to grow accuſtomed to their prince, he was ſuddenly taken from them. Hence the inconvenient ſystem was gradually changed; the eldeſt ſon of a prince ſucceeded his father, continuing to occupy the “ ſeat ” (or throne) upon which his father had ſat. Only one ſeat, that of the Grand

Principality of Kieff, did not pass from father to son; the princes had the right to take it over according to seniority. The result was that the princes were continually quarrelling with one another over the throne of Kieff, each one wanting to be Grand Prince. If the dispute was not peacefully settled, war broke out; then one or the other prince would find that he was not strong enough, and he would invite to his assistance nomads from the steppe or aliens from other countries. Here was an abundant source of evil.<sup>1</sup>

2. THE SEPARATED LANDS.—So after Yaroslaff's death, the Grand Principality of Kieff was divided into appanages. The separated lands were now governed by separate princes, from among the sons and grandsons of Yaroslaff; indeed, they came to be like so many distinct little States. Each prince settled all the affairs of his own territory, after deliberation with an Assembly of the People,<sup>2</sup> without reference to the Grand Prince of Kieff. Only in case of a hostile invasion the separate princes came to the support of the one attacked, under the command

<sup>1</sup> The system continued till the end of the twelfth century. It had an advantage in the sense of unity in the land which the transferences brought about; people were interested in the affairs of neighbouring cities, from which their next prince might come. At the same time, it was obviously a source of weakness through division, and led straight to autocracy.

<sup>2</sup> "Vyetche," from a verb meaning "to deliberate"; but doubtless practically identical with the "boyarskaya дума" of Chapter I.

of the Grand Prince of Kieff. The farther this or that territory lay from Kieff, the more independent it was of the Grand Prince. Thus the land of Galicia came to be entirely independent. It was the very westernmost strip of the Grand Principality of Kieff, forming a wedge between two alien States, Poland and Hungary; and now<sup>1</sup> Galicia is the one and only Russian domain under the domination of a Teutonic country—Austria.

The territory of Suzdal also was independent. This was the frontier country,<sup>2</sup> the counterpart of the land of Galicia, lying to the north-east of Kieff, on the Middle Volga. It was separated from the land of Kieff by impassable forests, so that it was only possible to gain access to it by a long circuit by river. Here lived mostly Finns, among whom Russians had settled; it contained the large old towns of Rostoff and Suzdal.

Last of all, the territory of Novgorod gradually became entirely independent of Kieff. Here was the rich commercial centre of Novgorod. Her citizens were very bold and enterprising. They amalgamated with their domains the whole northern part of what is now European Russia, and collected rich tribute, in furs, from other tribes. Novgorod came to be so thoroughly

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, 1912. Galicia's population was partly Polish and partly Ruthenian; the Ruthenians are the same race as the inhabitants of the Ukraine.

<sup>2</sup> East of Moscow. By whom the two "old towns" were founded is unknown. Many implements of Neolithic and Palæolithic times, mingled with bones of the mammoth, have been found in the district.

independent that her citizens invited any one of the descendants of Yaroslaff that they fancied to be their prince, and sent him about his business if he were not to their liking. The Assembly of the People<sup>1</sup> here had far more power than the prince.

3. DEVASTATION OF THE COUNTRY BY THE POLOVTSI.<sup>2</sup>—Life in Russia, after the division into appanages, was lamentable. The separate princes quarrelled among themselves, went to war, and laid waste one another's territory. Each principality, with its own prince, kept itself to itself, and cared little about helping others when danger threatened. As if by design, at this time there appeared upon the steppes a new nomad people, strong and very numerous—the Polovtsi. From the death of Yaroslaff onwards, the Grand Principality of Kieff suffered from the Polovtsi for 150 years. It came to be quite impossible to live in the southern parts of Russia, nearest to the steppe. As soon as spring came on, the inroads of the Polovtsi began. In these inroads they burnt towns and villages, lifted cattle, and carried off everything upon which they could lay hands. But their chief ambition was to kidnap as many sound young people as possible. After a big Polovtsi raid great was the lamentation in the land of Russia;

<sup>1</sup> "Vyetche."

<sup>2</sup> A Tartar tribe, now lost. The weakening of Kieff by death was increased by the stream of fugitives, in two directions—to Poland and Galicia, and to the Upper Volga, where they blended with the Finns.

the villages and towns were deserts, the cornfields threw up a mass of weeds and became the lairs of wild beasts. The Polovtsi carried off the people, crushed, naked, and barefooted, for sale in far distant lands, from which there was no return to their own country.

4. MONOMACH AND HIS DESCENDANTS.—No wonder that the people loved and admired princes who knew how to protect them from the Polovtsi. Such a prince was Vladimir Monomach, Vcevolodovitch.<sup>1</sup> He occupied the throne of the Grand Principality in the first half of the twelfth century (A.D. 1113–1125). Monomach time after time organized expeditions into the steppe against the Polovtsi, and by dint of very great exertions was so successful, that they did not dare to invade the Russian territory during his reign. He was equally successful in preserving the State from disagreements between the princes. In some cases by advice, in others by force he induced the princes to live together in peace, and not to ruin their peoples by their intestine dissensions. For the good of his own territory Vladimir spared no pains, and shrank from no sacrifice of property.

The high reputation of Monomach was inherited by his children, his grandchildren, and his descendants; every principality wished to have a member of the family as its prince.

<sup>1</sup> His mother was a daughter of the Byzantine Emperor Constantine; hence his Greek name. He married Gytha, daughter of Harold of England.



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Descendants of Monomach were not only Grand Princes of Kieff, but princes of far distant Galicia and Suzdal. But the Monomachs of Northern and Southern Russia soon forgot their kinsfolk, and again began to quarrel with one another, and to carry on intestine wars. And in the midst of all this there burst upon Russia a new and terrible calamity—the Tartar invasion.

## PART II

### THE MOSCOVITE AND THE LITHUANIAN RUSSIAS

#### CHAPTER I

##### THE MONGOL, OR TARTAR, YOKE

I. THE FIRST TARTAR INVASION.—From Asia there came new nomads, so strong and terrible, that Russia had never seen the like before. They were the Tartars, or Mongols. They appeared in the steppes of the Polovtsi, and attacked the Polovtsi. The Polovtsi in alarm sent couriers to their neighbours, the princes of South Russia, to beg for help. At once all the princes of South Russia, from the oldest to the youngest, gathered their forces, and advanced into the steppe to meet the Tartars. Far from the Russian frontier, in the very depths of the steppe, the two armies met by the River Kalka,<sup>1</sup> which falls into the Sea of Azoff. The encounter was disastrous to the Russians; the Tartars absolutely shattered the Russian forces. Few even of the princes themselves succeeded in escaping, to hasten home with the terrible news. This event happened in A.D. 1224.

<sup>1</sup> Now the Letza, near Ekaterinoslaff.



## 26 Moscovite and Lithuanian Russias

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The domains of South Russia, left without defence, without princes and without troops, trembled, in the expectation that their last days had come. But not a word was to be heard of the Tartars; they turned back to Asia, and went as quickly as they came. Year followed year, and still no Tartars appeared. South Russia breathed freely again. But North Russia was not at all disturbed; they had had no experience of fighting with nomads, as the steppes were far away from them. This was the state of things when the Tartar storm burst again, this time especially upon North Russia. Fourteen years after the first invasion the Tartars came again, but this time from other districts; not, as before, from the south, from the Caucasus, but from the east, from the River Ural.

2. THE SECOND INVASION, AND THE CONQUEST OF RUSSIA.—The Tartars were not like other nomads, who in earlier days had advanced into the South Russian steppes. They had established a powerful State in Central Asia, the Mongolia of to-day. From there they invaded various countries in pursuit of conquest, and subdued one region after another. But suddenly Jinghis Khan,<sup>1</sup> the founder of this State, died, and his vast possessions were divided among his heirs. The Russian territory, which since the Battle of Kalka the Tartars regarded as their own, fell to the grandson of Jinghis, Batti.

<sup>1</sup> "The Great Khan"—the name given by "a prophet" to the Khan of one Mongol tribe, who thereupon claimed headship over the rest, and in 1215 took Pekin.

Batti with his Tartars moved from Mongolia upon the Russian plain. They came in countless numbers, with waggons and herds, wives and children; they wished to establish themselves in the Russian plain, in places suitable for a nomad life, and to exact tribute from the Russian people. The first Russian territory which lay in the track of the Tartars was the district of Ryazan. They demanded tribute from the people of Ryazan—a tenth of all property. The people of Ryazan with their princes determined not to pay it, and defended themselves to the last extremity. Batti decided to inflict punishment upon those who would not yield, as a warning to others; the capital town, Ryazan, was taken, sacked, and burnt, and the same fate befell the other towns of Ryazan, within the walls of which the inhabitants shut themselves up. Then the Tartars pushed northwards into the domains of Suzdal, the chief principality of North Russia. Yuri, the senior prince of the territory of Suzdal (he, like the Prince of Kieff, bore the title of "Grand Prince"), hastily retired to gather an army. The Tartars besieged the capital town of the territory, Vladimir;<sup>1</sup> the city was taken, all the members of the Prince's family were killed, and everything was burnt, while the lands of Suzdal and Vladimir were laid waste. In the midst of this the Grand

<sup>1</sup> Founded in 1110 by Vladimir Monomach. Hence the position of Yuri as senior prince, and therefore "Grand Prince." He was entitled to be Grand Prince of Kieff, but preferred to make Vladimir his capital, while the Prince of Kieff also retained the title.

Prince Yuri approached with his army to meet the Tartars. A battle took place on the banks of the River Siti, which falls into the Mologa, a tributary of the Volga. Again the Russian forces were utterly defeated, and the Grand Prince was killed (A.D. 1238).

Batti now advanced into the domains of Novgorod, but did not reach Novgorod itself. The time of the spring floods was approaching, and rivers and lakes were overflowing their banks; Novgorod was inaccessible. The Tartars turned southwards and approached Kieff, the lovely old capital of the Russian domain. They were so numerous, that what with the bewildering creakings of the Tartar waggons, the neighing of their horses, and the groans of their camels, people in Kieff could not hear one another speak. From the farther side of the Dnieper Batti admired the beautiful city, with its white roofs and towers glittering among green gardens. He would have been quite willing to spare the city, but the inhabitants refused to surrender; nothing was left of Kieff but ruins. Then the Tartars moved through the land of Galicia upon the domains of the Germans. But he did not find it so easy to deal with the Germans, and the host turned back into Russia.

3. THE RELATIONS OF THE TARTARS WITH THE RUSSIANS.—The Tartars proposed to occupy the steppes which lie near the Lower Volga (not far from the point where it falls into the Caspian Sea). At the very mouth of the river they built their capital, Sarai, where the Khans resided.

This new Tartar dominion was called Zolotaya Orda.<sup>1</sup> Zolotaya Orda held Russia in its grip, and exacted tribute from the people; the Russians became their tributaries. To collect this tribute, Tartar tax-gatherers travelled about the Russian territory and oppressed the people. Besides exacting tribute, the Tartars required that the Russian princes should render homage in Zolotaya Orda; occasionally the princes were sent to pay homage to the Great Khans in Mongolia. They had to express their submission to the Khans, to take an oath of allegiance to them, and to humiliate themselves before them. However, beyond this the Tartars did not interfere with Russian affairs. So long as the people duly paid their tribute<sup>2</sup> and the princes were submissive, they required no more.

The Tartars treated the Orthodox faith with consideration. They did not touch the churches, and exempted the Orthodox clergy from taxation.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Golden Horde.

<sup>2</sup> The Tartar domination lowered the moral standard of the people, by leading them to cheat their masters over the tribute, and so to cheat one another. But it strengthened the position of the princes as against the boyars, and deepened the spirit of national unity.

<sup>3</sup> The Russian peasant is naturally a most religious person, and those who know Russia testify to the manner in which religion, outwardly at least, enters into his whole life and speech. The Tartar rule led orthodoxy and patriotism to be regarded as identical. We frequently find the cry, "The Church is in danger!" "Down with the heretics!" used to justify wars and annexations, even among those roughest of Russians, the Cossacks. The result is, that the Church is regarded as a national and political rather than as a spiritual institution, one in which people perform religious duties because the State requires it.



## CHAPTER II

NEW ENEMIES (THE GERMANS), AND ALEX-  
ANDER NEVSKI

I. INVASION OF RUSSIA BY THE GERMANS.—The first half of the thirteenth century was a terrible time for Russia. While the Tartars were pouring in from the east, the Germans<sup>1</sup> began to move upon them and oppress them from the west.

The Russian people had for a long time been acquainted with the Germans, and carried on commercial business with them. They came by ship, to bring their merchandise and to make purchases, by way of the Baltic Sea and the rivers falling into it—the Neva and the Western Dvina. Then these traders began to settle on the eastern shore of the Baltic, among the Letts and Esthonians (Finns) who lived on the Baltic coast-land. The Germans tried to subjugate these savage peoples, and to convert them to Christianity—that is, to their own Catholic faith. For this purpose they called to their assistance German “knights”—warrior monks,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Russian, “Nyemetz.” The word is of wider significance than our “Germans”; in Part I., Chapter III., § 2, it is used of the Austrians. “Teutons” would be better, but its use might be confusing.

<sup>2</sup> These were the “Order of the Teutonic Knights,” who in 1237 had taken into union with themselves the “Brothers of the Sword” (founded 1202) with their dominions. Their conquests by the fourteenth century stretched from the Oder to the Gulf of Finland; but with the submission of Lithuania to the Pope (Chapter III.), as there were now no new fields of conquest, their power began to decline.

who had become monks in order to serve God with their swords, and convert heathen to Catholicism. The knights settled at the mouth of the Western Dvina, and set themselves to baptize by force the savages living there, and to annex their territory; they made the people their serfs, binding them to the land.<sup>1</sup> Having secured this territory (Livonia) the horsemen contemplated converting to Catholicism their Russian neighbours as well. True, the Russians were Christians; but the knights wished them to change their observances for those of Catholicism. The Catholics of the whole of Europe were ready to assist the knights with both men and money, as they regarded this as an enterprise pleasing to God. The head of the Catholic Church, the Pope of Rome, actually urged the Swedes (a people of German race, descendants of the Varyags) to join them in undertaking the conversion of the Russians to Catholicism. The Swedes obeyed, so new enemies were threatening Russia on two fronts: the Swedes from the north, the Livonian knights from the west. The storm swept down towards the Russian territory nearest to the enemy—the region of Novgorod.

2. ALEXANDER NEVSKI VANQUISHES THE SWEDES.—Great Novgorod had not any princely families of its own. The citizens themselves

<sup>1</sup> The term used later (Part V., Chapter II.) of the Russian peasants. They so much feared that the conquered people would claim equality with them, that they would not allow them to learn the German language.



invited princes from other lands to rule them, and if the prince was not to their liking, summarily dismissed him, and chose another in his place. Most frequently the prince they invited was one of the family of Monomach, from the neighbour territory of Suzdal-Rostoff (or Vladimir). In 1240, when the Swedes came in their ships up the River Neva, and began to threaten the lands of Novgorod, a young prince from Suzdal, Alexander Yaroslavitch, was ruling in Novgorod. The Swedes came, not simply to fight, but to bring the people of Novgorod over to the Catholic faith. This they knew, and prepared to defend with all their might their own Orthodox faith and St. Sophia, as the Cathedral of Novgorod was called. Prince Alexander was still very young, but he proved to be a brave man and a skilful general. He fell upon the Swedes unexpectedly with his army of citizens, and utterly routed their forces; the survivors hastily retired in their vessels back beyond the sea, and never returned again. For this campaign Alexander received the title "Nevski."<sup>1</sup>

3. ALEXANDER NEVSKI VANQUISHES THE LIVONIAN KNIGHTS.—In the following year Novgorod secured deliverance from the Germans of Livonia. They had seized Pskoff, the chief fortress of Novgorod, and let loose their troops over the whole district. Prince Alexander was not in Novgorod at the time. He was at variance with the people of Novgorod; Novgorod was  
"Of the Neva."

always quarrelling with its princes. But seeing disaster impending, they brought themselves to ask Alexander to return; and as soon as he came back, everything took another colour. He cleared the land of the Germans and recovered Pskoff. The knights gathered a strong army, and Alexander went forth to meet them. The encounter took place on the ice of the lake Chudskoye (or Peipus); hence the battle was called "The Battle of the Ice." It was reported that before the fight began Alexander raised his hands to heaven, and cried, "Judge Thou my cause, O Lord, with this arrogant people." It was a desperate struggle; the ice was dyed purple with blood. At last the Germans took to flight. When the men of Novgorod entered Pskoff after the battle, Alexander rode in with a crowd of notable German knights following his horse. After this neither the Germans nor the Swedes made any further attempt to convert Russia to the Catholic faith. Thus the people of Novgorod, with their Prince Alexander, delivered the Russian people, and Orthodoxy, from the Germans and from Catholicism.

4. ALEXANDER NEVSKI GRAND PRINCE.—It fell to Alexander Nevski to deliver Russia also from the Tartars, though in a different way. This difficult task was laid upon him when he became Grand Prince of Vladimir. Not fifteen years had passed since the Tartar invasion of Northern Russia, and the land had not had time to recover from its ruined condition. Alexander

understood that it was no use to think of fighting the Tartars. His one object had to be simply to avoid provoking a new Tartar invasion; with this end in view he had to please the Khans with compliments and gifts. So Alexander Nevski visited Zolotaya Orda, and even the Grand Khan in Mongolia, to give the Grand Khan satisfactory assurance of his subservience. At the same time he used every effort to keep his subjects from annoying the Tartars in any way. He died on the road while returning from Zolotaya Orda. The Orthodox Church, in recognition of the great services of Alexander Nevski to the Russian people, enrolled him in the choir of saints.<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER III

### LITHUANIAN RUSSIA

I. THE ORIGIN OF THE LITHUANIAN DOMINION.  
—The Lithuanians<sup>2</sup> among whom the German knights settled, were akin to the early Slavs in speech, in conditions of life, and in their pagan religion. They lived in the deep frontier forest, and had no one to instruct them in the same way as the Russian Slavs had been instructed by the Byzantine Greeks. They were divided, like the early Russian people, into families and tribes, and their form of government was like

<sup>1</sup> Commemorated on September 12.

<sup>2</sup> Russian "Litovtsi"; the country is "Litva"—"Lithuania."

theirs, of families by elders, and of tribes by princes. There was no Lithuanian State until the time when their German neighbours came to settle in their neighbourhood.

The German knights grievously oppressed the Lithuanians, who resisted so far as they could. To deliver themselves from their oppressors, it was indispensable for the Lithuanians to combine under one authority, and to organize a State. So separate families and tribes began to combine under the authority of the strongest and most capable of the princes. The one who showed himself to be the strongest of all was the prince of that tribe of Lithuanians which lived on the Middle Niemen. The princes of that tribe became Grand Princes, and the Grand Prince Gedimin<sup>1</sup> made his city of Vilna the capital of the Lithuanian State.

2. LITHUANIA INCORPORATES THE RUSSIAN TERRITORY.—But at that time, do what they could, it was a hard task for the Lithuanians to defend themselves from the German knights. They had still to strengthen themselves further. On the east and south of the Lithuanian territory lay that of Russia. After the Tartar invasion, the South Russian (or Ukrainian) territories of Chernigoff, Kieff, and Volhynia were left in a sad state of desolation. Even the Western Russian territories (*i.e.*, White Russia), though they were not ravaged by the Tartars, as the Tartars did not come so far, were after the invasion entirely

<sup>1</sup> 1315-1340.



severed from the rest of Russia, and suffered from the quarrels of the princes. It was to the advantage of all these Russian territories, both Southern and Western, to combine with Lithuania. Under the protection of Lithuania, this united Russia need have no fear of the Tartars; apart from this, the Lithuanian rulers were powerful enough to secure internal order in the different territories, and to put a stop to the intestine quarrels of the princes. And so we have the Russian territories, Western and Southern, beginning, little by little, to combine with the Lithuanian State.<sup>1</sup> In the time of Gedimin, and especially in the time of his son Olgerd, the Russian people and territory in the Lithuanian State greatly exceeded the territory and people of Lithuania. Although this new State was called the Grand Princedom of Lithuania, it is more properly called the Lithuano-Russian State. All public business was transacted, and all documents written, in the Russian language. The Lithuanian princes married Russian princesses of the Orthodox faith, and in their families, and also at the court and among the upper classes, who carried on the government, Orthodox believers were found everywhere. The Lithuanian State was quite ready to become an actual West Russian State, when a change occurred.

<sup>1</sup> This seems to have been a matter of conquest, rather than of friendly arrangement. Kieff had been weakened, as we saw, by the Polovtsi and Tartar invasions, and by the appanage system; Gedimin conquered the whole of West and South-West Russia.

3. A TURN IN THE FORTUNES OF THE LITHUANO-RUSSIAN STATE.—In the year 1386 Yagailo, son and successor of the Grand Prince Olgerd, married the Polish Queen, Yadvig. Yagailo gladly consented to occupy the throne of Poland, and agreed to be baptized<sup>1</sup> according to Catholic observance; he had his own people also baptized in the same form of faith, as the Poles required. Thus the Lithuanian princes and people became Catholics.

Now the Poles, when they arranged for the marriage of Yagailo with Yadvig, supposed that Lithuania and Russia would combine with Poland and establish a single State. But the expectation was not fulfilled; neither the Lithuanians nor the Russians were willing to be amalgamated with the Poles. When Yagailo went to reside in Poland,<sup>2</sup> he designated as the ruler of Lithuania in his stead Vitoft, his first cousin. Vitoft, a very able man, and a strong character, carried on affairs as if he were not the viceregent for his king, but lord of the State of Lithuania; and the Poles were obliged to consent to this. From the alliance of Lithuania and Poland one great benefit followed: Yagailo and Vitoft together brought such pressure to bear on the German knights,<sup>3</sup> that they never again dared to attack

<sup>1</sup> Thus occasion for Papal interference and German invasion was removed. The King of Poland had been baptized in 966, with similar beneficial political results.

<sup>2</sup> At Cracow.

<sup>3</sup> At the Battle of Tannenberg (1410), the Grand Master of the Order of Teutonic Knights, with 4,000 of his men, fell. Vitoft died, aged eighty, in 1430, and the quasi-independence of Lithuania presently ceased.

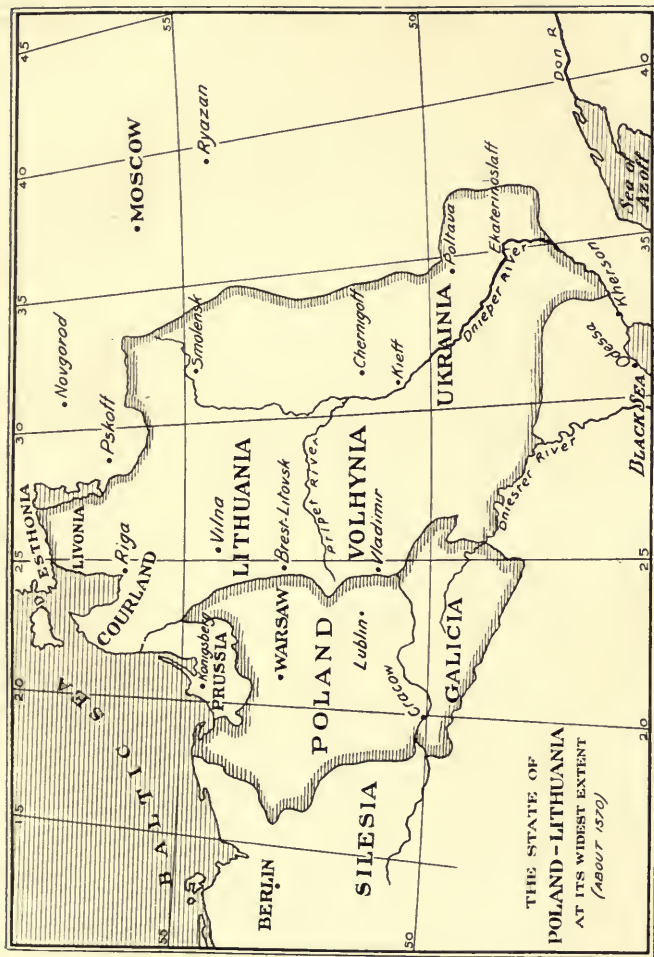


their neighbours. But for the Russian territories which were combined with Lithuania, it was not a good thing that Lithuania had drawn more closely to Poland and accepted Catholicism. The Catholic faith now was regarded as the leading faith of the Lithuano-Russian State, and the Catholics began to oppress the Orthodox. Polish institutions began to be established, which were different from the Russian. In Poland, the nobility (called *Shlyachts*) enjoyed peculiar rights, while the people on the land, the peasants, were so much down-trodden as to be out of count altogether. The same state of things began to prevail also in the Grand Principality of Lithuania; the condition of the upper class, the nobility, continually improved, while that of the lower class, the peasantry, continually grew worse.

4. THE UNION OF LUBLIN.—But a momentous change began to take place, though it bore fruit only in the year 1569.<sup>1</sup> In that year the nobles of Poland and of the Lithuano-Russian State went down to a general assembly<sup>2</sup> in the city of Lublin, and there determined that their States should combine, totally and completely, among themselves, and a single State be formed. This arrangement gave to the Poles a great preponderance over the Russians, and to the Catholic faith over the Orthodox. The Catholic clergy

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, about 150 years later. Chapter IV. returns to the chronological order of events.

<sup>2</sup> "*Sovyet*." Lublin effected a political, Brest a religious, union.





now aimed at securing that the Orthodox as well as the Catholics should be subordinate to the Pope of Rome,<sup>1</sup> not to the Patriarch of Constantinople. They succeeded so far, that a part of the Orthodox agreed to this extension of his jurisdiction. These Orthodox came to be called Uniats; the union of the Orthodox Church with the Catholic, forming the Uniat Church, was established at the Council of Brest<sup>2</sup> in 1596. But the majority of the Orthodox, especially the lower class, the peasants, burghers, and Cossacks, did not desire the union. From this time forward, in consequence of the union, and its accompanying oppression, there were continual disagreements between the South Russian people of the Ukraine<sup>3</sup> and the Poles.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Uniats observe Greek rites, but are under the jurisdiction of the Pope.

<sup>2</sup> A mercantile town on the Bug (Upper Vistula), famous, as Brest-Litovsk, for the treaty made with the Germans in 1917. Its name, "Brest of the Lithuanians," is an enduring monument to the greatness of Gedimin and his people.

<sup>3</sup> Ukraina—"borderland."

<sup>4</sup> It is remarkable that M. Ephimenko says so little of Poland; possibly so as not to leave the main track of Russian history—the development of "Great" (*i.e.*, "Moscovite") Russia (p. 1, *n.*). But he may well be anxious to avoid keeping alive the resentment of the Poles at their dependent position, by reminding them of the greatness of their nation in the past. He mentions the Poles as a Slav tribe (Part I., Chapter I., § 2), but it would not be gathered from his language that their territory subsequently spread beyond the Oder, the Dniester, and the Carpathian Mountains. Under Yagailo's dynasty (1386-1572) the kingdom of Poland, in union with Lithuania, reached the height of its power, stopping equally Turkish and German advances, shattering the Teutonic order, conquering Courland and much of Prussia, and holding back Moscovite

## CHAPTER IV

MOSCOW INCORPORATES THE NORTHERN  
RUSSIAN TERRITORIES

1. THE PARTITION OF NORTHERN RUSSIA INTO APPANAGES.—At this time, just as the Ukrainian (South Russian) and White Russian (West Russian) territories had combined around the Grand Principality of Lithuania, the territories of Great Russia combined about the Principality of Moscow as their centre. Northern Russia (the Grand Principality of Suzdal-Vladimir) lay under a great disadvantage. It was all divided into separate territories—appanages—and the farther away they were, the more they fell into pieces. Each territory lived its own life, with its own princes, and took no interest in other Russian territories, their neighbours. In such a condition of things it was quite impossible for them ever to be delivered from the Tartars. Some of the appanages were large, some small. Among the small ones was the territory of Moscow.<sup>1</sup> The Grand Prince Alexander Nevski

rule. Poland-Lithuania was a far greater and more highly civilized State than Moscovite Russia, stretching from the Baltic to the Dniester, and from 90 miles east of Berlin to 150 miles west of Moscow; it would not be too much to say that European Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century consisted chiefly of its fragments. In 1572 the principle of elective kingship was introduced, and the downfall of Poland began (p. 36, *n.*).

<sup>1</sup> Moscow is first mentioned in 1147, when Yuri summoned the Prince of Novgorod thither. It is said to have been founded by George, son of Vladimir Monomach.



on his death gave the territory of Moscow to his little son Daniel.<sup>1</sup> Daniel introduced the division of the Principality into appanages.

2. RISE OF THE APPANAGE PRINCIPALITY OF Moscow.—The territory of Moscow, with its city, was not large, but it was favourably situated. The only roads open for commerce or communication between Northern and Southern Russia, and between the rich countries of Asia and the commercial centre of Novgorod, lay through it. Besides this advantage, the territory of Moscow was surrounded on every side by other Russian territories, and so was free from invasions of foreign enemies. As the result, the city of Moscow quickly grew, and her territories became rich. Moreover, the princes of Moscow, descendants of Daniel, were clever, persevering persons; they especially made it their care to enlarge their territories and increase their power. Beyond all, the princes of Moscow always made it their aim to become Grand Princes of Vladimir. This was no easy matter, as they were juniors in the family of Suzdal princes. There were older branches of the family, superior to them; for instance, the Prince of Tver. But the princes of Moscow assiduously visited Zolotaya Orda, and paid court to the Khans, carrying costly presents, and so gained their aim of being made Grand Princes.

Now that they had obtained the dignity of Grand Princes, they did not establish themselves

<sup>1</sup> 1263.



in Vladimir, the ancient capital city of the State, but continued to reside in their own city of Moscow. Thus, step by step, Moscow became the chief city, and the Grand Principality of Vladimir came to be called the Grand Principality of Moscow. The position of Moscow was universally acknowledged, especially when she became the dwelling-place of the Metropolitan. The Metropolitan was the chief personage of the Russian Church; above him stood only the Greek Patriarch at Constantinople. After the destruction of Kieff by the Tartars, the Metropolitans transferred their abode northwards, to Vladimir; and again, when Moscow came to be the residence of the Grand Princes, the Metropolitans also settled there. The original reason for this was that the Metropolitan Peter, who was regarded with the greatest reverence on account of his holy life, was very fond of Moscow, and stayed there whenever he happened to make a visitation of the diocese. During one of these visits he fell ill, died, and was buried at Moscow. His successors determined to live in the place where the body of their saintly predecessor rested. Thus Moscow became not only the civil but also the ecclesiastical capital of Northern Russia.

3. THE FIRST PRINCES OF MOSCOW.—The rise of Moscow to power was especially due to Ivan Kalita, son of Daniel, and grandson of Alexander Nevski (1328-1341). He was a very persevering

man, a good economist,<sup>1</sup> and careful of expenditure; his nickname " Kalita " means a " wallet," or purse. He knew how to deal with the Tartars to secure his own objects, and carried out all his projects through the Khan.<sup>2</sup> The Khan allowed the Grand Prince to levy the tribute himself throughout the North Russian territories, and to forward it to Zolotaya Orda. This was a good thing both for the people and for the princes of Moscow, who, when they levied tribute for the Khans, laid aside a portion for their own treasury. This money enabled them to buy lands, or entire principalities, from weak princes, who thus became as entirely dependent upon the princes of Moscow as their own boyars. The territories of North Russia rapidly combined into one State, of Moscow, or Great Russia, the rapidity of the movement being due to the evident advantages to themselves which the Russian people saw. Instead of a number of weak appanage principalities, there stood a single strong power—that of the Prince of Moscow. A strong prince was better able to defend the country from an enemy or to establish order. Robberies of peaceful citizens upon the

<sup>1</sup> Russian "given to housekeeping." In his will he enumerated each one of his articles of plate. Some, however, attribute the nickname, not to his excessive parsimony, but to his generosity in almsgiving.

<sup>2</sup> The Prince of Tver having murdered some Tartars, Ivan was charged by the Khan with his punishment; by which he gained the goodwill of the Khan. His grandson, Ivan II., received the further honour of jurisdiction "over all princes," styling himself "Prince of all the Russias"—a great step towards Russian unity.

highways ceased; the boyars of the Prince of Moscow, and the appanaged princes, quarrelled less frequently with one another, and in consequence their lands were less frequently laid waste; the Tartars did not enter Russia. The cultured and educated people of the day (the only educated people at that time were the clergy) tried with all their might to help the princes of Moscow, by explaining to the illiterate what a blessing it is when there is one strong authority in a State.

## CHAPTER V

### THE BATTLE OF KULIKOVO, AND SERGIUS RADONEJSKI

I. THE GRAND PRINCE DIMITRI IVANOVITCH.—About a hundred years had passed since the death of Alexander Nevski, when Ivan Kalita's grandson Dimitri Ivanovitch<sup>1</sup> became Grand Prince of Moscow. Dimitri was not like the other princes of Moscow; he was a bold man who delighted to let everything he did be open. So he resolved to free Russia from the Tartars, and ceased to pay tribute; and when the Khan, Mamai, came with his army to force him into submission, Dimitri determined to go to meet him, and to measure his strength with the Tartars.

<sup>1</sup> 1359-1389.

It was a difficult undertaking. To the help of the Tartars came the Grand Prince of Lithuania, Yagailo. The older and more powerful of the Russian princes refused to take any part in the strife between Moscow and the Tartars; the Prince of Ryazan went straight over to the Tartar side, to save his territory from devastation, as it lay in the path of the Tartars. Only the petty princes, dependents upon Moscow, came to the help of Dimitri. However, the mass of the Russian people were enthusiastic in their good wishes for the success of the brave prince. The clergy prayed for him, and St. Sergius Radonejski himself gave his blessing to the Grand Prince for the war, and foretold victory.

2. ST. SERGIUS RADONEJSKI, HERO OF NORTH RUSSIA.—St. Sergius was held in as great reverence in the north as St. Theodosius by the people of Kieff, in the south; the Troitsko-Sergievski Monastery, founded by him, became the chief sanctuary of the Russian people. St. Sergius was the son of a soldier, of the town of Radonej. From his early youth he had a love for a life of retirement, and withdrew into the deep forest, shrinking neither from loneliness nor from danger. Here he spent his whole life in unceasing toil and prayer, with every kind of austerity. The famous Troitsko-Sergievski Monastery arose on the spot where he first settled. But St. Sergius desired that everywhere in the forests of the north new monasteries should be founded. His disciples travelled



farther and farther in every direction, overcoming the hardships of life in the forest. In these wilds there appeared first of all hermitages, where two or three anchorites resided, then monasteries; and round the monasteries people settled, uprooted the forests, and cleared the ground. Everyone revered St. Sergius, from the poor peasants, who found in him help and protection, to the princes, who visited the holy man to obtain his blessing or his counsel. When the Grand Prince Dimitri advanced, with his blessing, against the Tartars, St. Sergius sent with him two champions chosen from among his monks.

3. THE BATTLE OF KULIKOVO.—Dimitri Ivanovitch was resolved not to allow Mamai and his Tartars to break into the territory of Moscow and devastate it; and the Moscow troops were equally eager to meet the Tartars in the steppe. The encounter took place in the autumn of the year 1380, on the banks of the River Nepryadva, a tributary of the Don, in the plain of Kulikovo. A terrible fight ensued; both Tartars and Russians strewed the plain with their corpses. At first the Tartars pressed the Russians and drove them back; but then a concealed detachment started up from an ambuscade. So unexpectedly did it fall upon the Tartars, that they broke, and fled in panic. Mamai himself barely succeeded in escaping alive; the Russians carried off rich booty.

Nevertheless, the loss to the Russians also was

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very great. A host of princes and boyars fell, not to speak of soldiers of the line. So great a number of fighting men perished in this battle, that the Grand Prince had not the means to defend the State when two years later the Tartars again attacked it. Moscow was sacked and burnt; Dimitri Ivanovitch had again to declare himself to be a tributary of the Tartars. But the victory of Kulikovo was not won in vain. The Russian people were encouraged; they saw that it was possible to deal with the Tartars. The Grand Prince Dimitri received the title "Donski"—"of the Don"—after this battle.



## PART III

### THE TSARDOM OF MOSCOW

#### CHAPTER I

##### THE COMPLETION OF THE AMALGAMATION OF THE NORTH RUSSIAN TERRITORY

I. THE LAST INCORPORATOR, IVAN III., SON OF BASIL.—With each new Grand Prince the territory of Moscow increased. Now by force, now by diplomacy, now by money, the Moscow princes kept getting into their possession the appanages of other princes, whose principalities they amalgamated with their own territory. The process was completed by Ivan III., Vasilevitch (1462-1505). In his reign all the North Russian territories were formed into one Moscovite, or Great Russian, State.<sup>1</sup> Ivan III. was grandson of Dimitri of the Don. When he first became Grand Prince, there were still a certain number of appanages in North Russia, with their own separate princes; among the strongest of these was the principality of Tver.

<sup>1</sup> The neighbouring principalities were now asking for unity with Moscow, not submitting to it as the result of fighting or bargaining. Between 1228 and 1462 it is estimated that there were 90 internecine and 160 foreign wars.

The princes of Tver could not forget that they represented an older branch of the northern descendants of Monomach than the Moscow princes; hence there was a lasting feud between Moscow and Tver. Farther to the north there lay the still greater territory of Novgorod.

2. INCORPORATION OF THE TERRITORIES OF NOVGOROD AND TVER.—The territory of Novgorod was extensive, and strong, and rich. Still the Grand Principality of Moscow was more populous, and possessed a better army. So the princes of Moscow were able to domineer over Novgorod, and compelled her to invite to the throne only such princes as were satisfactory to them; and if the people of Novgorod offered any opposition, Moscow forbade the passage through her territory of bread and other merchandise necessary for Novgorod. The men of Novgorod perceived that Moscow was continually growing stronger, and that the time must soon be near when they must part with their independence. The boyars therefore formed the plan of placing themselves under the protection of the Grand Prince of Lithuania. But the common people, the "black people," thought otherwise. They feared the Catholics of Lithuania, while they revered exceedingly the Orthodox princes of Moscow. Disturbances broke out in consequence, and Ivan was terribly afraid that Novgorod might be thrown by her own act under the domination of Lithuania, in which case Lithuania would become a serious danger to her neighbours.

He had no love for fighting, but when he saw how great a danger menaced his State he did not hesitate for a moment. He carried out two campaigns against Novgorod, meeting with entire success; Novgorod submitted absolutely to Moscow. Novgorod as a free, independent State came to an end;<sup>1</sup> the bell by the sound of which her citizens were summoned to their senate was removed to Moscow. All the realms of Novgorod passed under the rule of the Grand Prince of Moscow; moreover, the principality of Tver, now surrounded on all sides by the territories of Moscow, was likewise compelled to surrender to her.

3. FREEDOM FROM THE TARTAR YOKE.—So Ivan III. became Lord<sup>2</sup> of all Northern Russia. He resolved no longer to be regarded as a vassal of the Tartar Khan, obliged to pay tribute. The Khan was equally determined to reduce the State of Moscow to subjection, and advanced with his forces, but had to withdraw without effecting anything. At this time Zolotaya Orda itself was in an exceedingly weak condition, and presently broke up altogether into three separate Tartar States: Kazan, Astrachan, and Krim (Krimia).

4. CONSEQUENCES OF THE TARTAR YOKE.—So the Tartar yoke came to an end, but Russia did

<sup>1</sup> 1478. Ivan subsequently ordered all the foreign merchants, by whom the trade of Novgorod was chiefly carried on, to be put in chains and lose their property, and the city rapidly declined.

<sup>2</sup> "Gosudar,"



RED SQUARE AND SACRED GATE OF THE KREMLIN AND CATHEDRAL OF ST. BASIL



not soon forget it. It left behind it grievous consequences. It could not be to the advantage of Russia that she should have been for so long in slavery to a savage Asiatic people. Our ancestors borrowed from the Tartars much that was evil.<sup>1</sup> They were brutalized in their relations with one another, and in their family life. Severe punishments, floggings with the knut, and torture were introduced; ancient Russia knew nothing of these things. The rich people adopted the practice of securing their wives and daughters in balconied chambers,<sup>2</sup> so that they might not be seen by strangers, or if they were seen, it was only with veiled faces, according to the Tartar custom.

Moscovite Russia was at this period far inferior to Lithuanian Russia in literature and civilization. It is said of the people of Moscow of the time that they were given to drunkenness, fierce quarrels, and brawls; and in business matters, to deceit and roguery. Those in a position of authority—army officers,<sup>3</sup> secretaries, and officials—followed crooked ways for the sake of gain, and extorted bribes. In many ways the Tartar slavery drew Russia away from the cultured West to the brutal and savage East. The

<sup>1</sup> Their racial influence upon the country was nothing like that of the Arabs in Spain; they settled as nomads on the thinly inhabited steppes, built no cities, and introduced no civilization, but simply held the people under their domination.

<sup>2</sup> "Terem"—a Greek word.

<sup>3</sup> "Voevodes," military district magistrates.



people of Moscow now began to engage in wars with foreign peoples, refused to trust them, and would not readily admit them into their territory. In consequence the civilized peoples of Western Europe knew little of Northern Russia, which they called "Muscovy," and regarded as a savage Asiatic country.

5. THE BEGINNINGS OF INTERCOURSE WITH EUROPE.—But in the time of Ivan III., at least a slight change for the better was observable. The Lords of Moscow opened up relations with those of Western Europe, sending ambassadors to them, receiving foreign embassies and inviting experienced instructors from abroad. It must be remembered that until the conquest of the territory of Novgorod, the people of Moscow had no egress into Europe; to make one's way there over land through other States was too difficult. After the conquest the realm of Moscow was extended to the Baltic Sea; it now became possible to reach Moscow from Western Europe by sea.

But apart from this, intercourse between the State of Moscow and Western Europe was further hindered by the following circumstance: Ivan III. became a widower early in life; he took to himself a second wife from a foreign country, Italy. She was a Greek princess. At this period the Byzantine Greek Empire, from which ancient Russia had received Christianity and Christian civilization, was no longer in existence. It had been conquered by the Turks; in 1453 Constan-

tinople itself, the capital of the Byzantine Empire and of the whole Orthodox world, fell into their hands. Sophia<sup>1</sup> Paleologus, niece of the last Greek Emperor, found an asylum in Italy, in the city of Rome, where lived the Pope, the head of Catholic Christianity. The Pope formed the plan of giving Sophia in marriage to the Grand Prince of Moscow, the only Orthodox ruler who was independent of the Mussulman Turks. The Pope had a design of his own: with the help of Sophia to amalgamate the Orthodox Church with the Catholic, under his own rule. But the Orthodox of Moscow were so deeply devoted to their own faith, that it was vain to think of a union of the Churches.

6. IVAN III., VASILOVITCH, TSAR OF MOSCOW.—With Ivan's marriage to a Greek princess a great change took place in the life of the Grand Prince, both at his court and in Moscow city.<sup>2</sup> Sophia had no liking for Moscovite simplicity; she wished the court of Moscow to be like the pompous Byzantine court. Ivan III., too, himself considered that changes were inevitable. Now we find him no longer simple "Prince of Moscow," but "Tsar"<sup>3</sup> and "Autocrat"—

<sup>1</sup> Her name Zoe was changed on her reception into the Orthodox Church. The marriage took place by proxy, in St. Peter's, and a papal legate accompanied her to Moscow, who by his arrogance greatly offended the people, while Sophia held with her husband against the Pope.

<sup>2</sup> Sophia held to the title of Byzantine Empress, and therefore could receive foreign ambassadors. The Russian two-headed eagle was the crest of the Byzantine Emperors.

<sup>3</sup> The Roman "Cæsar," German "Kaiser."

Lord, independent<sup>1</sup> and absolute, regarding himself as the successor of the Byzantine Emperor, protector of Eastern Orthodox Christianity from its oppression under the Mussulman yoke. Foreign architects erected magnificent palaces in Moscow for its lord; instead of the old wooden churches, sacred edifices of stone appeared; even the boyars began to build themselves houses of stone. The lord himself no longer mingled with the boyars,<sup>2</sup> or appeared before the people with the old unceremonious simplicity. Everything was novel, pompous, solemn.

## CHAPTER II

### TSAR IVAN IV., "THE TERRIBLE"<sup>3</sup>—THE GOOD AND EVIL OF HIS RULE

I. THE CHILDHOOD OF IVAN IV.—Ivan IV., grandson of Ivan III., has left behind him much for which his reign is remembered; not only on account of its length, which was more than fifty

<sup>1</sup> The title "autocrat," a translation of the Byzantine Emperor's title, had no reference to any unlimited power over his own subjects; he was "not subject to any foreign power," Tartar, Slav, or Byzantine.

<sup>2</sup> During the last half of the fifteenth century 150 boyar families came to Moscow from all parts, mostly descended from princes, and claiming privilege on that account, not on that of merit. They wished to rule Russia collectively; the next reign is the climax of the struggle between aristocratic greed and the one alternative then possible—autocracy. Ivan's ideal appears to have been democratic autocracy.

<sup>3</sup> Russian "Grozni," from "Groza," "thunder." He used "groza" himself of the awe which, as Emperor, he wished to inspire. Waliszewski entirely denies that "terrible" is the right word. M. Baring says he was

years (1533-1584), but because he was the man from whom, beyond all others, the land of Russia derived a maximum of good, and also a maximum of evil.

Ivan IV. grew up an orphan, as he lost both father<sup>1</sup> and mother in his childhood. He was brought up by the boyars. The boyars of Moscow, among whom were numerous descendants of the appanage princes, had always assisted the lords in the government. Naturally therefore, they administered the State during the minority of Ivan IV. But they brought up the young lord very badly, as each boyar thought first and foremost how to secure that he himself should be premier, and get the power into his own hands. They did not try to uproot the ugly inclinations of the young prince, who was naturally cruel, and loved to amuse himself by tormenting animals. Further, during these years they continually insulted the self-willed youth by their disrespectful behaviour towards him. So mistrust of the boyars,<sup>2</sup> and an unfriendly disposition towards them, became deeply ingrained in the heart of Ivan IV.

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"Ivan the Terrible" because he was first "Ivan the Terrified," living in constant fear of the boyars, and exceedingly superstitious.

<sup>1</sup> Basil, who compelled his childless wife, after twenty years of married life, to enter a monastery, and at once married a young woman named Helena, the fruit of the union being Ivan the Terrible.

<sup>2</sup> It was inevitable that the struggle between Emperor and boyars, autocracy and aristocracy, should come when a strong Emperor appeared, without these contributory circumstances.



2. THE FIRST YEARS OF IVAN'S REIGN.—In his sixteenth year Ivan was crowned as Tsar, and married a lady of his own choice, from an ordinary boyar, not princely, family—Anastasia Romanoff. In the same year an important event occurred. A terrible fire<sup>1</sup> almost entirely destroyed the wooden<sup>2</sup> city of Moscow; a great number of people, especially of children, perished. The people of Moscow were left without a roof over their heads, or food to eat, and were greatly agitated. Then there appeared before the Tsar, in his palace beside the city, a priest named Silvester, who urged upon him, in severe language, that the misfortunes of the people were the punishment of God for the sins of the Tsar.<sup>3</sup> These words stirred the soul of the young lord; he resolutely determined to live henceforth for the good of his people. With the help of Silvester, at a meeting of his confidential council, he appointed certain persons, who enthusiastically joined him in undertaking the good of their

<sup>1</sup> Certain citizens were accused by the boyars of incendiarism and witchcraft; a howling mob demanded their lives, and Ivan in answer cut off the heads—of the accusers.

<sup>2</sup> It is calculated that every village in Russia is burnt down and rebuilt once in seven years.

<sup>3</sup> This is the account given by Prince Kurbski, after his quarrel with Ivan. Silvester had been attached for years to a Moscow Church, and Ivan had always been guided by the Metropolitan, Macarius; there seems to be no place for an Elijah-like apparition. Probably Ivan, honestly desiring the good of the people, not of his dynasty—for the first time in Russian history—and therefore wishing to weaken the boyars, associated with himself the Church; but at the same time wished not to have too strong a representative, and chose Silvester in preference to the Metropolitan.



fatherland and of their fellow-countrymen. Among these the leaders were, besides Silvester, Adasheff, an eminent citizen,<sup>1</sup> and Prince Kurbski.

3. The Tsar<sup>2</sup> and his counsellors began first to consider how to protect the common people from harm on the part of the governing officials. At that time all those in authority were supported, not by stipends paid in money, but by supplies in kind. The inhabitants of a district had to maintain their own governor, and to give him all supplies in kind that were requisitioned by him. These "maintenance men" exacted more than they needed, and oppressed the people. The first step taken by Ivan IV. and his counsellors was to compile the "Legal Code,"<sup>3</sup> a collection of laws, indispensable for justice. Then they began to substitute elected persons for the "maintenance men"; instead of persons being appointed by the Crown for the services of government and justice, the people were to elect their own governors and judges. Again, it was at this time that the first Popular Assembly<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Neither a noble nor a boyar. New families are rising to power.

<sup>2</sup> Peter the Great took Ivan as an example of a good administrator. "Only fools," he wrote, "ignorant of his circumstances, of the nature of his people, and of his greatness, call him a tormentor."

<sup>3</sup> "Sudebnik." The work had been begun by Ivan III.

<sup>4</sup> "Zemski Sobor," lit., "Council of the Land"; see Chapter III., § 7, note. It met again only in 1566, 1584, and 1598; in 1566 it consisted of 32 bishops and clergy, 258 boyars, 9 landed proprietors, 53 merchants, 23 Smolensk merchants, and a few officials. There is no idea here of

was convoked. The Tsar summoned to his presence at Moscow persons from every part of his realms, chosen from the different classes, and took counsel with them.

All these measures devised by Ivan IV. for the betterment of internal affairs were good. Good also were the steps he took in regard to external affairs, and, in particular, the conquest of Kazan.

4. CONQUEST OF KAZAN.—Although the Tartars were no longer a menace to the Tsardom of Moscow, they were still very unquiet neighbours. They fell like robbers upon the peaceful Russian people, plundered them, laid the country waste, and carried them off into captivity and slavery. It became an inevitable necessity to conquer Kazan. So Ivan gathered an army from all his vast dominions, and moved in person upon the city. The Russians had not invested the strong walls of Kazan for a month before they succeeded in taking it, thanks to the skill of a German engineer who drove a mine under the wall, and blew it up with gunpowder. So Kazan was reduced, great numbers of captives and slaves falling into the hands of the Russians; the old Tartar city was destroyed, and rebuilt as a Russian city. The conquest of Astrachan soon followed. The whole of the Volga basin was now within the

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popular representation, as these were chosen by the classes to which they belonged. The Assembly rather confirmed, than restrained, the Imperial autocratic power.

boundaries of the Tsar of Moscow, and the population of Moscow was able to settle on all the fertile steppes lying on the middle and lower Volga. This was of very great benefit to the Russian agricultural labourers, for whom their old land in central Russia, taken in from the forest, had by this time become too narrow.<sup>1</sup>

5. CHANGE FOR THE WORSE.—In the course of these events, Tsar Ivan had his first disagreements<sup>2</sup> with his counsellors; but things went on somehow or other until the death of the Tsaritsa, Anastasia. After the loss of his beloved wife, a noticeable change came over the Tsar; he cut himself off from his old counsellors, and when Prince Kurbski himself ran away to Lithuania, to take service with the lord of that country, the Tsar altogether hardened his heart against the prominent boyars, and began to see treason everywhere among them. He left Moscow, and went to the suburb of Alexandroff, whence he informed the people of Moscow<sup>3</sup> that he did not wish to be Tsar any longer. However, in answer to their entreaty that he would not abdicate, Ivan consented to stay, but only on condition that no one should hinder him from punishing traitors. He pro-

<sup>1</sup> Ivan also incorporated Viatka, Ryazan, and Tver.

<sup>2</sup> Ivan, being seriously ill, summoned his counsellors to take the oath of allegiance to his son Dimitri; which they refused to do, as Anastasia was not of their class. They supported the claims of Ivan's uncle, Prince Vladimir.

<sup>3</sup> He wrote to the boyars, accusing them of oppressing the people, and to the people, absolving them of all blame; the letters were read in the square of Moscow.

ceeded to erect a separate palace for himself in the suburb of Alexandroff, and told off for his personal service a thousand nobles, and at the same time designated certain towns and lands for their support. All of these were called "privileged,"<sup>1</sup> and the nobles in his personal service "privileged guards." It was the duty of the privileged guards to eradicate treason in the rest of the realm—the "Provinces." The realm was thus divided into "Privileged" and "Provincial" districts.

Now began a terrible time. The Tsar blazed with hatred against the boyars, especially against the most eminent and respected among them. The privileged guards, the Tsar's creatures, looked out for opportunities of picking a quarrel with such boyars, and of accusing them on any ground whatever. Well for the accused if he suffered only the loss of land or property; more often he was arrested, thrown into prison, and then tortured and executed. Many of the boyars' families were in this way entirely extirpated. But these cruel measures were not confined to the eminent boyars. The privileged guards hunted for treason everywhere in every district. Under their savage torture suspected persons were compelled to own to treason which

<sup>1</sup> "Oprichina," "peculiar": the word for the dowry of a prince's bride. Ivan had to choose between joining with the boyars, leaving all to them, or crushing them; what he did was, first, to divide them. The Oprichnik towns were about twenty, in different parts; the boyars, taken from their old surroundings, were powerless in isolation.





IVAN THE TERRIBLE

FROM AN ENGRAVING BY D. CUSTOS





did not exist. Meanwhile the character of Ivan IV. continually grew more cruel; he delighted in being present at tortures and executions. The Metropolitan, Philip, endeavoured to influence the Tsar; he turned to him during the service in church, and addressed him thus: "Among all peoples law and justice exist; only in Russia is no mercy shown to the innocent and the righteous. Bethink thyself, and see that thou too art a mortal man. Innocent blood is required of thee." For these bold words the Metropolitan was shut up in prison, and there strangled by the most brutal of all the privileged guards, Malyuta Skuratoff.<sup>1</sup>

6. STATE AFFAIRS.—Ill was it for the State to be under such government. Failure began to attend her enterprises. The most serious failure<sup>2</sup> was the burdensome war with Livonia, and with the Poles<sup>3</sup> on account of Livonia. This Livonian war dragged on for twenty-five years. It was very important for the State of Moscow to be relieved of such disagreeable

<sup>1</sup> Ivan, on his way to destroy Novgorod, where he slaughtered 50,000 people for "treason," sent Malyuta to Philip to ask for his blessing from his prison. Strange to say, Malyuta is the popular hero of the folk-songs. "The populace has forgotten all about Ivan's wars; it remembers only the levelling action of his reforms. The Russian people admired, applauded, loved him." Beyond question, they sided with him against the boyars; he is "the destroyer of treason on Russian soil."

<sup>2</sup> Our historian does not mention the burning of Moscow by the Tartars in 1571.

<sup>3</sup> Note that the Poles are still in every way superior to the Russians. It was Peter the Great who finally turned the scale.

neighbours as were the German knights, and to dispossess them of the country on the Baltic Sea. But before the war came to an end, so far from acquiring any additional territory, she had actually lost the slice of coastland which belonged to Novgorod.

Only one fortunate event brightened the close of the reign of Ivan the Terrible: the Russians crossed over into Asia, beyond the Ural Mountains, and began the conquest of Siberia. Yet even this achievement was not due to the Tsar's army and officers, but to Cossacks, acting on their own account. "Cossack" was the name<sup>1</sup> given to people who refused to live within the limits of the State, perform various kinds of service, render obedience, or pay tribute. They withdrew beyond the frontiers, southwards, into the wild steppe-lands, and there fought with the Tartars and lived as they liked. Such Cossacks from the Don and the Volga, with their hetman Ermak, son of Timothy, advanced into

<sup>1</sup> A Tartar word="robbers." "Free as a Cossack" was as common a proverb as "Cruel as a Cossack." They settled chiefly on the Don and the Dnieper, the Dnieper Cossacks forming the "Knighthood of the Zaporozhian Setcha"—the "stronghold beyond the rapids"—absorbing a strong Tartar element, which gave them energy and ferocity. They fortified the numerous islands of the Dnieper, and one Cossack was considered to be equal to one hundred Poles, or two hundred Tartars. They formed a republic, under the strongest and most cunning among them, called the hetman (German, Hauptmann; Russian, Ataman), and had their own voevodes, starosts, and commandants in the towns. For two hundred years, in fighting for their own liberty, they were the buffer between Poland and the Tartars; then, as we shall see, they lost their liberty, but they had saved Russia.

Siberia at the invitation of some merchants named Strogonoff, who owned much land and did business on the River Kama, at the foot of the Ural Mountains. The Cossacks passed these mountains into Asia, and there conquered the Tartar kingdom on the River Obi. From that point the Russians made their way farther and farther eastwards, until they took possession of the whole of Siberia.<sup>1</sup>

### CHAPTER III

#### THE TIME OF TROUBLES,<sup>2</sup> AND A NEW DYNASTY

1. THE BINDING OF THE PEASANTS TO THE SOIL.—At this time the peasants working on the land were exceedingly discontented, for the following reason. The right of binding men to the soil was introduced, a system hitherto unknown. In early days the peasants had established themselves on their own freehold land,

<sup>1</sup> Apart from its political importance, this reign is interesting to us Englishmen. In 1553 Richard Chancellor, setting out to find a north-west route to India, made his way to Archangel, and a Charter of Trade was granted to an English Company. A little later Anthony Jenkinson greatly endeared himself to Ivan and travelled widely for commercial purposes in Russia, being employed even as confidential agent between him and Queen Elizabeth. The Terrified negotiated, first, for an asylum in England in case of his expulsion; secondly, having just married his sixth wife, for an English bride, Mary Hastings, who at the last moment declined the honour.

<sup>2</sup> A recognized term in Russian history: "*Tragœdia Muscovita*,"

which they occupied as vacant, no man's land (God's and the sovereign's), or had cleared from the forest; neither land nor forest was previously of the slightest value to anyone. For this occupied land of theirs the peasants paid dues to the treasury, maintained their Government, and rendered services at command—the conveyance of State couriers and the construction of roads, bridges, and town walls. But as the State of Moscow increased its power and extended its boundaries, all the requirements of the State, and the need of a well-equipped army to defend its vast frontiers, became greater. But there was not enough money in the treasury to maintain such an army. Then the Government inaugurated the system of making grants of land, with peasants upon it, to the soldiers, so that the peasants, instead of performing other obligations, and paying taxes to the State, maintained such soldiers, who were now their landlords.<sup>1</sup> But the peasants, called upon to maintain their landlords, supposed that they could look after their own interests and their own lands as before. Those who were discontented with their condition acted on this presumption, by moving into the fertile lands of the steppes of the Volga basin, and the landowners were left without people and without mainte-

<sup>1</sup> The implications of "maintenance" were undetermined; they came to be understood to mean three days' work a week for the landlord, leaving three for the peasant to earn his bread and the money for his taxes. But a rapacious landlord would exact more.



nance. So the Government began to forbid the peasants to leave their lands, without the consent of the landowner. This system was called the "right of binding to the soil." New arrangements were made after the death of Ivan. The peasants rebelled against these new arrangements, and went off into the forests, to become robbers, or ran away beyond the borders of the State to join the Cossacks.

2. DEATH OF THE TSAREVITCH DIMITRI.—When there is deep discontent in a State, the State itself decays and totters. This proved to be the case in the State of Moscow after the death of Ivan the Terrible. The first few years, while the weak and delicate son of Ivan,<sup>1</sup> Theodore, was Tsar, were peaceful. The wise and energetic Boris Godunoff,<sup>2</sup> brother of the Tsar's wife, governed the State, and the State more or less recovered from the rule of the Terrible. Fourteen years passed, and then Tsar Theodore died without children. As there was no heir to the throne, the Popular Assembly elected Boris as Tsar. Regardless of the fact that Boris was an experienced ruler, sincerely desirous of the good of his subjects, disorders arose over the succession of Boris, and very nearly ruined the State.

The first occasion of the disorders was this. Besides Theodore, Ivan the Terrible left another son, by his second wife, the young Dimitri. To

<sup>1</sup> Ivan had killed his eldest son in a fit of temper.

<sup>2</sup> A man of Tartar descent, and therefore suspected.

him had been given, as a sort of appanage, the town of Uglich, where the Tsarevitch and his mother resided. While Theodore was still on the throne Dimitri died, apparently by a violent death. He was playing in the courtyard of the palace, and was found dead with a wound in the throat. The alarm was given, and the people who ran to the spot killed some men whom they suspected of the murder of Dimitri. But later on certain boyars, who were sent from Moscow to investigate the matter, found that the Tsarevitch, in a sudden fit of epilepsy, had fallen upon a sword with which he was playing. Shortly after this event, a rumour ran through Russia that the Tsarevitch had been killed by secret agents of Boris Godunoff. It could not be denied that the death of Dimitri was convenient for Godunoff, as the Tsarevitch was the next heir to the throne. When Godunoff became Tsar the rumours gained strength that he was guilty of the murder of Dimitri.

Now in the State of Moscow the harvest was for three successive years a failure, and a terrible famine resulted. However much the Tsar distributed in money for bread, from his own private property or from the public funds, all was too little. The people murmured, and said that this was the punishment of God for the sin of the Tsar. And in the midst of all this another rumour ran through the country, that the murderers secretly despatched by Boris had made a mistake, and taken another boy for

Dimitri, while his relatives had hidden the true Dimitri, and sent him away to Lithuania.

### 3. APPEARANCE OF THE PSEUDO-DIMITRI.—

In agreement with this rumour, there appeared in Lithuania a certain young man, who gave himself out to be the Dimitri thus saved from death. It was said that this impostor was a runaway monk from the monastery of Chudoff, whose real name was Grishka Otrepieff.<sup>1</sup> From Lithuania the pretender made his way over to Poland. The King<sup>2</sup> and the pans (lords) were ready, quietly, and without declaring war, to help the pseudo-Dimitri. The pretender, with an army of his own, gathered from various military forces in Poland and Ukrainia, came up from the South, and crossed the frontiers of the State of Moscow. Here he was encountered by Godunoff's army, more numerous, under experienced officers, and, further, strengthened by foreign mercenary detachments, accustomed to warlike operations. The Pseudo-Dimitri was unable to deal with such an army. But at this crisis an unexpected event happened: Tsar Boris suddenly died<sup>3</sup> (A.D. 1605). In a moment

<sup>1</sup> The identity of the pretender is one of the puzzles of history. It seems on the whole most likely that Dimitri really had been killed. The sense of the need of an absolute ruler was so firmly ingrained in the minds of the people, that they were ready to accept any claim to legitimate authority. Probably the boyars arranged the matter, in opposition to Godunoff; Shuiski was his secret rival.

<sup>2</sup> Sigismund III., a strong Papist, who thought he saw his way to the conversion of Russia.

<sup>3</sup> Under circumstances which strongly suggest poison.

fortune passed to the side of the pretender. The Moscow army went over to him; the whole population welcomed him as their actual Tsar. He proceeded in triumph to Moscow with all the honours of a Tsar, and was accepted by the old Tsaritsa, the mother of Dimitri, as her genuine son.<sup>1</sup> The pretender was placed on the throne, and reigned for eleven months.

4. DOWNFALL OF THE PSEUDO-DIMITRI.—Once upon the throne, the pretender comported himself as a true Tsar; he devoted himself to State affairs, and gave attention to the welfare of his subjects. But he did not know the customs of the Moscow people and court, while the Moscow people held very closely to their customs. They reckoned it as a sin that the Tsar did not steam himself in the bath<sup>2</sup> on Saturdays, that he ate veal, and that he wore foreign clothes. It was especially unacceptable to them when his bride, the Polish Princess Marina Mnishek, arrived in Moscow accompanied by a great number of Poles. The boyars began to stir up the Moscow people against the Poles, and when they had succeeded in raising a riot their adherents slew the pretender in the con-

<sup>1</sup> Boris had confined her in a monastery, from which she would be glad to escape.

<sup>2</sup> The "bania" is a kind of Turkish bath, with a stove in the middle of the room, and wooden benches and shelves upon which the bathers lie, being afterwards washed with warm water, and rubbed down with herbs, costing (pre-war) 1½d. for the poorer people, up to 1s. for "first class." The custom of a bath on Saturdays and the eves of festivals still holds. Russian peasants seldom change their clothes, but they keep their bodies clean.



fusion. After this the boyars announced to the people that the occupant of the throne had not been the true Tsar, but a deceiver and a heretic, who wished to ruin the State and hand it over to the Poles. They and their partisans then proceeded, without the sanction of the Popular Assembly, to place upon the throne an eminent member of their own order, Basil Shuiski, son of Ivan.

5. THE BEGINNING OF THE TROUBLES.—Now arose continuous storms, which were within an ace of ruining the State of Moscow. The old and cunning Shuiski inspired neither love nor confidence;<sup>1</sup> and, meanwhile, dangers internal and external threatened the State from every side. The discontented peasants and other "black" people gathered round a certain Bolotnikoff, who came to Moscow and threatened to exterminate all the boyars and landowners. The Tsar's forces had not yet succeeded in dealing with Bolotnikoff, when a second pretender appeared. He gave himself out as the pseudo-Dimitri, who had been saved from death. A great number of discontented people of all sorts, especially Poles, gathered round this second pretender. He advanced upon Moscow, and encamped ten versts<sup>2</sup> from the city, at the village of Tushina; from this circumstance he became known as "the thief of Tushina." The forces

<sup>1</sup> The boyars found that they had put a stronger man in Godunoff's place.

<sup>2</sup> A verst is 3,500 English feet.



from Tushina laid siege to Moscow, and at the same time to the monastery<sup>1</sup> of Troitska-Sergieff, but the monks held firm behind their thick stone walls, and manfully defended the monastery.

In the midst of all this, external enemies also appeared; neighbouring States desired to profit by the disorders in Moscow. On the north, the Swedes took Novgorod and its domain; on the west, the King of Poland, Sigismund, advanced to seize Smolensk and its territory. The people of Moscow, in despair, compelled their unlucky Tsar to abdicate the throne (A.D. 1610); he took the tonsure as a monk, and the leading boyars undertook the government of the State. But this brought no improvement.

6. DEVELOPMENT OF THE TROUBLES.—The thief of Tushina had been killed, and his army dispersed. But though this danger was past, in every part of the State numerous gangs of men were moving about, drawn either from the discontented people of Moscow or from the Cossacks and Poles. The whole population was in a state of alarm and fear; peace and order were nowhere to be found. The most dangerous enemies were the Poles. In hopes of propitiat-

<sup>1</sup> "Lavra" (Greek, Laura), a title granted also to the three other chief monasteries of Petchersk, St. Alexander Nevski at Petrograd, and Potchayeff in Volhynia. Next to them come seven "stavropigias" (lit. "places where the Cross was erected" in the early days—Part II., Chapter V., § 2); monasteries, the superiors of which are appointed by the Synod.

ing them, the boyars formed the plan of inviting the Polish Prince Vladislas<sup>1</sup> to occupy the throne. Moscow actually took the oath of allegiance to him, and admitted the Polish army within its walls. But Sigismund's calculation was to seize the throne of Moscow for himself, not for his son; at the same time, the thought of having a Polish Tsar was unacceptable to the last degree to the people of Moscow. The clergy especially were dismayed at the prospect, and urged the people not to admit an alien to the throne. The Patriarch, the head of the clergy, at this time was Hermogen. He was living in exile among the Poles in Moscow, but contrived to send letters from there in all directions throughout the State, urging the people most solemnly to resist an alien. Similar letters were also sent from the Troitska-Sergieff monastery. Hermogen actually died in exile; it was said that the Poles did him to death by starvation.

7. THE SAVING OF THE STATE.—The people of Moscow saw that the State had been brought to the brink of ruin; no hope of saving her appeared from any quarter. But they themselves, strange to say, began to take steps to save themselves and their fatherland. The cities acted in concert, and came to an agreement as to the necessary measures. One city, Nijni Novgorod, especially, arose in her strength to meet the crisis, and in Nijni Novgorod one man

<sup>1</sup> Son of Sigismund.

was the hero of the day—the local Mayor,<sup>1</sup> Kosmas Minin<sup>2</sup> Suchoruk. The lower orders of the city, stirred by his burning speeches, began with gathering, as the matter of the first importance, a war-chest, each man offering his “third coin”—that is, a third part of his income or goods; the money was gathered for the hire of mercenaries. Thus the lower orders organized an army of no great size, and invited an officer experienced in warlike affairs, Prince Pojarski, to take command. Other towns also joined their resources in money and men with those of Nijni Novgorod. Thus an army was formed of sufficient strength to free Moscow from the Poles.<sup>3</sup> In October, 1612, the city was taken.

<sup>1</sup> “Zemski starosta.” The root *star* means “old”; the members of a local assembly were “starshii” (“elders”), and the acting chairman “starosta.” The word is often rendered “baillie.” “Zemski” properly means “of the land”; as the Russian people are so closely identified in mind with the land, it comes to mean “of the people,” as in “zemski sobor” (“popular assembly”), “zemskaya reforma” (“administrative reform”).

<sup>2</sup> He was a butcher.

<sup>3</sup> Poland, as we have seen, was far beyond Russia in strength and culture. Here she is for two years in occupation of the Kremlin, yet expelled. Boleslaff “the Rash,” King in 992, is a fair representative of Poland; “heroic, rash, anarchical, wanting in political tact and the spirit of organization.” Twice they were warned by their Kings that the principle of an elective King led to ruin; in their Assembly a single member could veto all the proceedings—because there were two classes of nobles, *schlyachts* and *pans*, each jealous of the other. Their expulsion from Moscow was “a victory of democracy over aristocracy; of the will of the people, expressed by one Sovereign, over the conflicting wills of a band of aristocrats” (M. Baring).



THE KREMLIN, MOSCOW

FROM AN ENGRAVING ON COPPER PUBLISHED IN 1830





## 8. THE FIRST TSAR OF THE NEW DYNASTY.—

The first care of everyone now was the election of a Tsar. For this election representatives of the whole State assembled. Their choice fell upon the young Michael Romanoff, son of Theodore, connected by family with Ivan the Terrible through his first wife Anastasia. It is related of young Michael that immediately after his election as Tsar he was saved from death by a peasant, Ivan Susanin. He was living with his mother on his property near Kostroma. One of the robber bands which were wandering about in all directions at the time, either Poles or Cossacks, learning of the election of the young Romanoff boyar as Tsar, sought to kill him; but Susanin, to save the Tsar, led his enemies into the trackless forest, and there perished with them.

Michael Theodorovitch assumed the Tsardom on March 14, 1613. As Tsar (1613–1645), his administration was wholly directed to the one object of securing harmony and order, and restoring the ruin wrought in the State by the Time of Troubles. Much time and toil had to be spent in clearing the country of robbers, taking a census of the population, compiling an equitable scheme of taxes and dues, and organizing the treasury and army. In these difficult tasks Tsar Michael was greatly assisted by the Popular Assembly<sup>1</sup>—*i.e.*, the representatives chosen from the whole State. When the Poles set free from

<sup>1</sup> The Time of Troubles had further thinned the boyars. As he had been elected by the people, he had to work with the people.

captivity the Lord's father, Philaret,<sup>1</sup> he, as Patriarch, ruled the State together with his son, and assisted him. Little by little order was established in the State; it was found possible even to deal with external enemies—the Swedes and the Poles. But all this was not accomplished without much loss; the Tsardom of Moscow was reduced on two fronts. In the north, the Swedes advanced from their own territory, along the shores of the Gulf of Finland; on the south-west, the Poles seized the domains of Smolensk and Chernigoff.<sup>2</sup>

## CHAPTER IV

### ALEXIS MICHAELOVITCH, AND THE ANNEXATION OF LITTLE RUSSIA

1. TSAR ALEXIS, "THE QUIET", AND THE CODE.—Michael Theodorovitch had only one son, Alexis; he too succeeded to the throne while quite young, being only in his sixteenth year. He was a man of thin person and mild disposition; hence his nickname, "the Quiet." But his reign was not peaceful. The boyars who had his ear made profit out of his inexperience, selling justice, accusing the innocent, and

<sup>1</sup> "Lover of virtue." The Romanoffs had been accused of attempting to poison the Tsar, and Theodore took refuge in a monastery, adopting this (Greek) name.

<sup>2</sup> In 1634. Only by the treaty ratifying this acquisition was Michael recognized as Tsar, Vladislav renouncing his claims.

acquitting the guilty for the sake of money. Apart from this, the people of Moscow were discontented with the system of justice; in the courts there was much iniquity and corruption. At last they rose in revolt. The young Tsar had no suspicion of what his favourites were doing; the uprising of the people opened his eyes. Mortified to the utmost, Alexis determined to secure that every one of his people, "from the highest rank to the lowest, should obtain justice and equity in every single matter, granted equally to all alike"; and at once convened the Popular Assembly.<sup>1</sup> In this meeting of the Assembly a new compilation of laws was drawn up called "The Code of the Popular Assembly."<sup>2</sup> This code was circulated throughout the State, so that henceforth the people knew the laws under which they lived.

2. DISTURBANCES AMONG THE PEASANTS AND COSSACKS.—By this time the peasants were altogether bound to the soil. In consequence of this bondage, a great number of them made off to the Don, and joined the Cossacks, with whom they raided the spoils of the Black and Caspian Seas, under the Cossack hetmans. But one of these hetmans, Stenka Razin, led his people to the Volga, to seize the spoils to be found within the State of Moscow. As soon as the Cossack detachments appeared, the peasants everywhere rose in revolt against their landlords

<sup>1</sup> "Zemski Sobor."

<sup>2</sup> "Sobornoe Ulojenie."

and authorities.<sup>1</sup> It was only with great difficulty that the Tsar's officers crushed Razin and re-established order.

3. REVISION OF THE CHURCH BOOKS.—During the reign of Alexis Michaelovitch the people found another occasion of discontent, of a peculiar character. The Patriarch Nikon undertook a revision of the Church books. These books had been brought into Russia, together with the Orthodox faith, from Greece, and had been translated from the Greek language into the Slavonic. These were not our present books, but written in manuscript; printed books only came into existence in the time of Ivan the Terrible. Until his time all books were copied; in making the copies errors frequently crept in. Hence it came about, that the Moscow people used different words in the prayers and Church ceremonies, and in ritual actions had different usages from those prescribed; for instance, they had their own mode of using the fingers in making the sign of the Cross, of reading "Alleluia," and so on.<sup>2</sup> But the Moscow people of his time were illiterate; it was difficult to convince them that a thing in which their fathers and grandfathers had believed was in error.<sup>3</sup> When the books were revised, and reissued in printed

<sup>1</sup> Razin ruled from Nijni Novgorod to Astrachan.

<sup>2</sup> Three fingers to be used instead of two, "Alleluia" to be said twice instead of thrice.

<sup>3</sup> Twelve years later those who would not accept the new book were excommunicated and delivered to eternal torments; this was naturally held to include those who had used the old book in the past.



form, many of them refused to recognize the revised books. They regarded it as the greatest sin to offer prayers according to these books. Among these recalcitrants many were to be found who belonged to the upper classes, as well as to the common people. Hence arose the schism (Raskol).<sup>1</sup>

4. ANNEXATION OF LITTLE RUSSIA (THE UKRAINE).—In the reign of Alexis the State of Moscow greatly increased in strength, and became so powerful that the Ukraine was incorporated with it. The Ukraine suffered greatly from the Poles after the Union of Lublin, when South Russia became a Polish domain. The Orthodox faith was persecuted; the Polish pans (nobles) divided among themselves the lands of Ukrainia, and then the peasants could live only upon lands which belonged to the pans. Their condition grew worse from year to year. Besides the peasants, there were numerous Cossacks in Ukrainia, defending the country against the attacks of the Tartars of the Krimea. In early times the Cossacks had been entirely free, governed by their own elected hetmans and commandants; they took up vacant land, and devoted themselves to hunting and fishing

<sup>1</sup> The liturgical grievance was used as a pretext for opposition to Alexis's political reforms. Sophia and Peter I. persecuted the "Raskolniks," with the usual result of stimulating their energies. There were in 1910 about 25,000,000 "Old Believers," and the original Raskol has formed innumerable sects, some of them ultra-fanatical, teaching suicide, child-murder, etc.; but most of them with a political basis.



wherever they pleased. Anyone was at liberty to join them. But the Poles began to introduce a different system. They required that the Cossacks should be reduced to a small number—a few thousands<sup>1</sup>—while the rest of the people, who had attached themselves to them, had to settle as peasants on the lands of the pans. So these few thousand people who were permitted to remain Cossacks had to live only in the places prescribed, and to be under obedience to Polish rulers. When this system was first introduced into the Ukraine it caused a rebellion against the Poles.<sup>2</sup> But the Poles were too strong; they quelled the rebellion, and oppressed the Ukraine all the more severely.

But in 1648 the Ukraine suddenly rose under the leadership of Bogdan Chmelnitski, a hetman, experienced in warlike affairs, who called to his aid the Tartars of the Krimea. At once everything was changed to a different tune. The Cossacks, with the revolted peasants, not only shattered the Polish army, but actually “purified” Ukrainia from Poles and Jews.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> King Stefan thought to end his difficulties with them by inviting 6,000 to join his army. But they all wanted to come, so as to be equal to the freeborn Ukrainians. He “registered” 6,000, who yet were not to enjoy this equality, while the rest were to stay on the land.

<sup>2</sup> The Cossacks considered that the Union meant an alliance between the Polish King, nobles, priests, and Jews, against Orthodoxy, and proposed to get rid of oppression and infidelity together.

<sup>3</sup> The Jews, into whose hands all trade was allowed to fall, were one of the causes which led to the eventual downfall of Poland, through their continual fomenting of ill-will between the different classes and individuals in the country.

All who did not succeed in saving their lives by flight perished by cruel deaths. But Poland had no wish to be denied the Ukraine; a desperate war began. The Poles devastated the frontiers, but were unable to advance in any quarter; not a single district fell away.

Then the hetman, to quit himself finally of Polish control, approached Tsar Alexis with the request to take Ukrainia under his protection. The Popular Assembly was convened, and agreed to take her.<sup>1</sup> So Ukrainia, in 1654, came under the "high hand" of the Lord of Moscow. This matter of Ukrainia brought upon the Tsar a new war with the Poles. But by this time the State of Moscow was far stronger than the Poles. Not only did she succeed in taking the Ukraine out of their hands, but actually recovered the territories lost since the Time of Troubles, Chernigoff and Smolensk.<sup>2</sup> However, it became so difficult to maintain quiet in the Ukraine that at last it was inevitable to divide it between the States of Moscow and Poland. That part of it was left to Moscow which lay on the left bank of the Dnieper, and this was called Little Russia.

<sup>1</sup> A similar offer had been made in 1635, when the Don Cossacks seized Azoff, but was declined, owing to the cost in men and money.

<sup>2</sup> 1673.

## PART IV

### THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE

#### CHAPTER I

##### THE FIRST YEARS OF THE REIGN OF PETER THE GREAT

1. THE SECOND MARRIAGE OF TSAR ALEXIS.—The reign of Peter I., or "the Great," effected great changes in our State; from being the Tsardom of Moscow it was transformed into the Russian Empire. Peter himself, too, bore no resemblance to the lords of Moscow, his ancestors; and his life, from early childhood, was altogether different from theirs. Peter was born in 1672, and was the youngest son of Tsar Alexis, his only son by his second wife, Natalia Kirillovna Narishkin; by his first wife Alexis had two other sons and several daughters. Natalia Kirillovna, to whom Alexis was married late in life, was not like other Moscow ladies, She had not been kept under lock and key in the "terem"<sup>1</sup>; she was brought up by a boyar named Matvieff, head of the Diplomatic Office, and was well acquainted with European life, liking "Nyemetz"<sup>2</sup> customs (everything foreign

<sup>1</sup> P. 51.

<sup>2</sup> *I.e.*, "German," p. 30, *n.*







was in those days called "Nyemetz"). The Tsar Alexis equally approved of foreign things, but eschewed them at his own court. Towards the end of his life, however, he began to depart from the old Moscow customs. All sorts of beautiful and interesting articles from abroad appeared in increasing abundance—such things as mirrors, pictures, musical instruments, and clocks. The Tsar even allowed a theatre to be erected, though many of the people of Moscow regarded such a contrivance as a very great sin.

## 2. THE CHILDHOOD AND ACCESSION OF PETER.

—The Tsarévitch Peter was only four years old when his father died. Alexis' heir, his son Theodore, took care of his young brother. His instruction began early, in the subjects which boys of the time usually studied: reading Church Slavonic, the Psalter, and the Book of Hours. But when Peter was ten years old a great change in his fortunes occurred; Tsar Theodore<sup>1</sup> died, leaving no children. Next in succession to the throne were Ivan, his brother, very feeble and delicate; and Peter, his half-brother, resourceful and vigorous,<sup>2</sup> but young in years. Among the boyars a keen dispute arose; one party supporting Ivan and his family the Miloslavs, the other Peter and his family the Narishkins. Finally

<sup>1</sup> His one interesting achievement is the burning of the "Books of Pedigrees," the source of endless rivalries and quarrels between the ancient families.

<sup>2</sup> At the age of seventeen he wrote to his mother, "Your son is still at work"—a type of his whole life.

the Narishkin family gained the upper hand, and the ten-year-old Peter was proclaimed Tsar.

3. PRINCESS SOPHIA AND THE STRYELTSI.—But here Sophia, the most clever and resolute of the daughters of Tsar Alexis, interposed her claims. She won over to her side the Stryeltsi, or "arrow-men." These arrow-men were a body of troops, always kept mobilized at Moscow for the protection of the city. At this moment the arrow-men were dissatisfied with their commanding officers. Sophia by means of her adherents circulated a rumour that all their grievances were due to the Tsaritsa Natalia and her family the Narishkins. The arrow-men believed the story and broke into the Kremlin in arms, resolved to gain satisfaction from the offenders with their own hands. A large number of the Tsaritsa's family, and also Boyar Mattvieff, perished by a cruel death; the arrow-men even threatened to murder Natalia Kirillovna. Finally they demanded that both brothers, Ivan and Peter, should be recognized as Tsars, and that Princess Sophia should be regent during Peter's minority.

4. THE LIFE OF PETER AWAY FROM THE TSAR'S COURT.—Peter and his mother now retired from the court at Moscow, and lived in a village near the city. Regent Sophia regarded Peter and his mother with contempt. No one paid any attention to the boy's upbringing, and he grew up just as he pleased. His favourite amusement was to play at soldiering and warfare. In his

earliest childhood, while at the court of his father, he was constantly hearing discussions upon military matters, as the lords of Moscow were much exercised with questions of how to remodel the raw Moscow army on foreign lines, to instruct it in foreign methods, and to equip it with foreign arms. During these years Peter gathered together young men wherever he could, from whom he formed fighting battalions according to foreign ideas. He was assisted in this undertaking by foreigners of the military and artisan classes who were living close to Moscow in the Nyemetz suburb<sup>1</sup> (the men whom the Government had invited from abroad as instructors). So Peter grew up, and his amateur army grew with him, until two regiments were formed. At this time Peter realized that whether for military affairs, or for anything else, education was absolutely necessary. So he began to study from these foreigners arithmetic, geometry, and other sciences.

5. PETER ATTAINS HIS MAJORITY.—Peter had now reached the age of seventeen years. Having thus attained his majority he was capable of governing the State. But Sophia wished to be Empress herself. A rumour gained ground

<sup>1</sup> These were not all Germans. But the term "Nyemetz," given to the foreign quarter shows that the "peaceful penetration" of Russia by Germans is not a thing of yesterday. Since the days of Ivan the Terrible British commercial houses had held a strong position in Russia, and Peter employed many British officers, especially in his navy.

that the arrow-men were again plotting a rising and taking measures to murder the young Tsar. Although this rumour of a proposed assassination was not credited, Peter and his mother took alarm, and withdrew within the walls of the Troitska-Sergieff Monastery. When the news reached Moscow that Peter was threatened with danger, the people of Moscow hastened to Troitska for the protection of their lawful Tsar.<sup>1</sup> The Tsarina Regent perceived that everyone was forsaking her, and of her own accord retired and joined her brother, to die, as she supposed, with him. But Peter, so far from showing any desire to see her, ordered her to be confined in a monastery.<sup>2</sup>

6. CONSTRUCTION OF A FLEET.—Peter was now lord. But for the time he left affairs, so far as government was concerned, in the hands of his mother and the boyars, and devoted himself solely to the question of the organization of the army, and, first and foremost, the equipping of a fleet. The one idea firmly rooted in his mind was to open for his realms a passage by sea to the other countries of Europe. The State of Moscow had only one sea by which such a passage could be made, the White Sea; but it was impossible to navigate these waters for the

<sup>1</sup> The crushing of the rebellion was largely due to a Scotchman, Patrick Gordon, who had already distinguished himself in an unsuccessful campaign against the Krim Tartars.

<sup>2</sup> Where she died fifteen years later. Ivan willingly surrendered his claims to Peter, and died in 1696, leaving three daughters two of them Catharine and Anna.



greater part of the year, owing to the ice. In spite of this, however, Peter formed a design of launching boats on the White Sea, and with a view to this paid two visits to Archangel. But before long his thoughts turned to another quarter instead of the White Sea—to the Black Sea. As the result of the incorporation of Ukraina, the frontiers of our empire were contiguous to those of the Turks and Tartars, and passages of arms with them naturally followed. Peter conceived the idea of seizing the town of Azoff, a Turkish stronghold at the mouths of the Don; then he would be able to secure an outlet into the Sea of Azoff, and so into the Black Sea. But it was possible to take Azoff, or at least to surround it, only by sea. For this operation ships were indispensable; Peter set to work to build them, at the town of Voronej, on the Don. The building was carried out with unusual speed; in a few months a fleet was ready, and Azoff fell.<sup>1</sup> This was enough to show to all the extraordinary abilities with which the young lord was endowed.

7. FOREIGN TRAVEL.—Peter perceived that both he himself, and the Russian people of the time generally, fell far below the standard of foreign peoples in knowledge and understanding. He was passionately desirous of gaining instruction for himself, so far as was possible, and also of instructing his subjects. But he could only gain instruction abroad. So he hit upon the

<sup>1</sup> To Gordon.



remarkable idea of visiting foreign countries, an unheard-of thing for a Tsar of Moscow. He determined to travel, not as Tsar, but as an ordinary nobleman. The foreign lands which most interested Peter were Holland and England. He made his longest stays in these countries,<sup>1</sup> to study shipbuilding, but besides this he learnt a great many other things. He worked like an ordinary artisan, as carpenter, locksmith, and turner, and at the same time became acquainted with European life, and various sciences, so filling the gaps in his scanty culture. Peter studied the things which were likely to be of value to his subjects; his thoughtfulness for his fatherland never deserted him. Thus the Tsar spent more than a year in unrelenting toil, and it was his intention to reside abroad for some time longer. But suddenly he received the news that the arrow-men were again in revolt.<sup>2</sup>

8. RETURN HOME: REFORMS.—On his return Peter not only punished the arrow-men severely, but actually abolished the service. He had a further reason for disliking them, because they, together with the schismatics,<sup>3</sup> held obstinately

<sup>1</sup> He was assigned Evelyn's house at Deptford as a residence; his damages to which were assessed at £350!

<sup>2</sup> Gordon, who had been left in command, controlled this last effort of the aristocratic and reactionary party.

<sup>3</sup> "Raskolniks": See Book III., Chapter IV. Nikon's new service-book was published in 1654; in 1666 the recalcitrants were anathematized; in 1687 the first edict commanding their extermination was issued by Sophia, and a terrible persecution began. They scattered into the wilder parts of Russia, forming colonies of their own, building monasteries, and gathering to themselves all the



PETER THE GREAT AT DEPTFORD DOCKYARD



to the old Moscow customs, while Peter was determined to use every effort to put an end to them. It was particularly displeasing to the Tsar to see a Moscow man, with his bushy beard, in cumbersome long-skirted garments, which impeded his movements. The very first time that the boyars appeared before him, he ordered them to cut off their beards,<sup>1</sup> and to wear foreign short-skirted dress. All this was very annoying to the people of Moscow, but they had to obey. If any refused, the Tsar himself cut off their beards, and the skirts of their kaphtans,<sup>2</sup> and punished them by imposing fines. Next, he required of all the Moscow people that they should give up the rest of their old customs, and conduct their lives in European fashion; that they should not confine their wives and daughters in the "terem," but allow them to walk out, and appear among visitors, with their faces unveiled; and that parents should send their sons abroad, or have them taught at home, by foreign tutors, sciences, languages, and European manners. The people of Moscow were frightened out of their wits; a rumour spread among the populace that it was not the Lord Peter Alexeyevitch who had returned from abroad, but a

discontented. Peter they declared to be Antichrist. At first he continued the persecution, but later, as a broad-minded man, who himself had had to reform the Church, and did not consider religion and politics to be necessarily connected, he left them alone.

<sup>1</sup> The Raskolniks here saw the attempt of Antichrist to deprive men of their likeness to God.

<sup>2</sup> Long flowing robes with large collars and many buttons.

German "changeling." Peter's own actions were not in the least like those of a Moscow Tsar. He wore foreign dress, and that of the utmost simplicity, as he could not bear luxury; he used to drive about the city alone without any retinue, in his own one-horse chaise; he never had his pipe out of his mouth, though the people of Moscow regarded smoking tobacco<sup>1</sup> as the greatest sin; he paid unceremonious visits to anyone whom he fancied, and delighted especially in drinking and making himself at home with foreigners in the Nyemetz suburb. Peter had in contemplation various still more sweeping changes in his realms; but scarcely a year had passed after his return from abroad, when he found himself compelled to prepare for the arduous Northern War.

## CHAPTER II

### HOW THE STATE OF MOSCOW WAS TRANSFORMED INTO THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE

I. THE OUTBREAK OF THE NORTHERN WAR.—All the first years of the eighteenth century—more than twenty years—were occupied by the war between the Russian State and Sweden. The war began in the year 1700. Sweden was in those days a Great Power, and Peter understood that it would be a difficult task to deal

<sup>1</sup> In Alexis's Code, a man who smoked tobacco was to have his nose cut off.



with such an antagonist. But he had the advantage of taking up arms, not alone, but in alliance with two other neighbouring States, Denmark and Poland;<sup>1</sup> and further, the King of Sweden at the time was Charles XII., still a youth and without experience, in military matters and statecraft alike. Peter took the risk of entering upon this burdensome war, because it was indispensable for Russia to take from the Swedes the Baltic sea-coast. Once possessed of this, the Russians would have an outlet on the Baltic Sea, secure easy and convenient transport to Western Europe, and receive enlightenment from her. Peter was ready to face every difficulty, with such an aim before him.

The war began very inauspiciously for the Russians. Charles XII., in spite of his youth, showed himself to be an excellent general. He speedily crossed the Baltic Sea with his splendid army, and fell upon the Russians, who were besieging the Swedish fortress of Narva. The Russian army was totally defeated; one might say it was annihilated. Charles XII. now supposed that he had no need to trouble himself about such a weak opponent, and set out for Poland; so Peter was able to pursue his operations without hindrance. He began to levy and organize a new army, and by dint of unsparing exertions accomplished this with extraordinary speed. By the winter following the defeat at

<sup>1</sup> Poland was anxious to recover Livonia, ceded to Sweden in 1660.

Narva he was again in command of an army, equipped with guns and all necessities. Charles XII. was meanwhile "stuck" in Poland, busy with his war against the Polish King. Then Peter undertook the operation of seizing the sea-coast of the Gulf of Finland, and the territory of Livonia (now Esthonia and Latvia), formerly occupied by the German Knights. The Russian army took the Swedish towns one after another; these now became Russian instead of Swedish fortresses. The River Neva was seized; and in the year 1703 Peter founded the city of Petersburg,<sup>1</sup> and for its protection built the sea-fortress of Kronstadt. However, it was too much to expect that Charles XII. would not make an effort to recover his lost possessions.

2. THE VICTORY OF POLTAVA, AND THE END OF THE WAR.—Seven years had passed since the beginning of the war when Charles XII. withdrew with his army from Poland, and advanced within the boundaries of Russia. The situation was most critical; a Swedish victory would drive the Tsardom clean out of Europe into Asia. No one knew how Russia could be delivered from the Swedes, or where Charles would next throw his army. Even Moscow was in panic. But quite unexpectedly the Swedes turned south-

<sup>1</sup> A city built to order, not the result of natural growth, in a most inconvenient, unhealthy spot, by thousands of men brought from all parts of the country, most of them to die over their work. Peter's jester said that it had on its four sides, "More, Gore, Moch, and Och"—"Sea, Sorrow, Morass, Moaning."



THE PALACE OF PETER THE GREAT, PETROGRAD



wards, into Little Russia; Charles had been invited there by the hetman of Little Russia, Mazepa, who thought to separate Little Russia once more from the Russian State. But the position of the Swedes in Little Russia was exceedingly precarious. True, Hetman Mazepa, with a few thousand Cossacks, came to their assistance. But the people of Little Russia did not follow Mazepa, and looked upon the Swedes as enemies. In the spring, Charles laid siege to the Ukrainian fortress of Poltava; Peter hastened to its relief. On June 27, 1709, the famous Battle of Poltava took place between the Russian and the Swedish forces; the victory of the Russians was absolutely decisive. The Swedish army was annihilated, the troops killed, taken prisoner, or dispersed. Charles himself, with Hetman Mazepa,<sup>1</sup> barely succeeded in saving his life by flight beyond the Dnieper into Turkey.

After the victory of Poltava, the Northern War dragged on for ten years more, but it was out of the question for the Swedes even to think of recovering the Baltic sea-coast. Peter made the city of Petersburg the new capital of his State; a Russian fleet appeared upon the Baltic Sea, and fell upon the Swedish shores. The Swedes, now weakened beyond recovery, had to make overtures for peace. This peace (the Peace of Nystad) was concluded in 1721. Besides

<sup>1</sup> Mazepa was finally crushed by Menshikoff, Peter's great general, once a pastrycook's boy.



part of Finland, with the town of Viborg, and the eastern coast of the Gulf of Finland, Russia now acquired Livonia with the town of Riga, and Esthonia with the towns of Revel and Narva. It was Muscovy, to which its European neighbours referred with contempt, that began the Northern War; but it was Russia, the Russian Empire, the most powerful of the States of Northern Europe, that brought it to an end.

3. REFORMS.—The Northern War greatly strained the resources of the State. The army had to be formidably increased, and more than that, to be reformed. The main strength of the Moscow army lay in cavalry, raised by the gentry, which served territorially, and after a war was demobilized. A standing army of regular troops was now indispensable, the main strength of which would lie in infantry. For this army soldiers were now for the first time levied from the peasant and burgher class by conscription.<sup>1</sup> The maintenance of this standing army was costly; and the establishment of the fleet was very costly. As the ordinary expenditure of the State was thus enormously increased, the revenue had to be increased also. A poll-tax was introduced for this object—that is to say, the tax was levied, not as heretofore, house

<sup>1</sup> The effect of this was that the boyars were swallowed up in a new nobility, "Dvoryans" ("Dvor," "the court"), founded on merit, not on birth. As all have a common interest in the land, all must serve; and now a private soldier can become an officer and a noble, and in the Civil Service all who attain to the eighth of the fourteen classes become noble.

by house, but on every individual male person, according to the "revised list," or "revision of the poll," as it was called. But, in spite of all, money still ran short. All the old dues were increased, and new ones devised. The people were burdened with the poll-tax, with the very heavy dues levied upon all the necessities of life, and with the frequent enrolments under conscription.<sup>1</sup> To lighten the strain laid upon them, Peter endeavoured to enrich the State: he had inquiries made into its natural sources of wealth, such as mines; he built factories and workshops, and attended to the means of communication, roads and canals<sup>2</sup> for the easier transport of merchandise.

Peter was dissatisfied with the entire organization and government of his realm. He began to re-establish these on new lines, in harmony with those of the rest of Europe. He abolished the Government offices at Moscow, and instituted Departments<sup>3</sup> in their place. All affairs were properly distributed among these departments; affairs of law, the revenue and expenditure of the State, the army, the navy, each class of affairs had its own separate department. The matters of business belonging to each depart-

<sup>1</sup> During Peter's reign there were forty levies, five of which were throughout the country.

<sup>2</sup> From the Neva to the Volga, and the Volga to the Caspian; of enormous value to Russia. But this, and the building of Petersburg, was done by forced labour.

<sup>3</sup> Russian, "Colleges"—a foreign word. Nearly all the presidents were Russians, the vice-presidents nearly all foreigners.

ment were resolved by its members, according to the majority of voices; Peter considered that in such departments the abuses of venality and intrigue found in the old offices would not occur. He dealt in the same way with Church affairs. A special department was formed, drawn from the higher clergy, to take the place of the Patriarch<sup>1</sup>—the Synod. To assist the Tsar, instead of the Council of Boyars, the administrative Senate<sup>2</sup> was now created.

But above all things, Peter thought and cared for the enlightenment of his people. Moscovite Russia knew only Church schools. Peter built secular schools everywhere: elementary "cyphering" schools, in which letters and figuring were taught, and higher schools for instruction in such sciences as Peter regarded as most beneficial to life. All the nobles were laid under compulsion of being educated; an illiterate nobleman was reduced to labour as a peasant. For these schools, and for popular enlightenment, books were indispensable; Peter ordered books to

<sup>1</sup> In 1589 Job, Metropolitan of Moscow, was made Patriarch by the Patriarch of Constantinople, according to the usual decentralizing policy of the Orthodox Church. After his death in 1700, Peter left the post vacant for twenty years, and then appointed his Synod, consisting of a layman as procurator, three metropolitans, one exarch, five archimandrites appointed by the Emperor, the Court chaplain, and the Chaplain-general to the forces. Dogma lies outside of its province, as that is settled for ever by the seven general councils of the undivided Church.

<sup>2</sup> Russian "Senat." It consisted of nine members, with power to co-opt nine more; its work was at first administrative, not legislative, so as to provide against Peter's absences.

be translated from European languages into Russian, and at once there appeared such a multitude of books as Moscovite Russia had never imagined to exist. Throughout his life the Emperor Peter I. thought of the welfare of his realm. This welfare he understood to consist in this: Russia needed to depart, as far as possible, from the old customs of Moscow, and approximate to those of Europe. He regarded his duties of government as service to the State, burdensome, ceaseless; and such service he required equally from every one of his subjects.<sup>1</sup> He died, a willing sacrifice to his duty; he contracted a chill while rescuing a drowning soldier. Peter was born in May, 1672, and died in January, 1725.

### CHAPTER III

#### RUSSIA AFTER PETER THE GREAT

I. SAD CONDITION OF THE COUNTRY.—Peter died without having time to make a will, designating his successor in the government of the State; worse still, there was no one to whom its government could be entrusted with confidence.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> But his poll-tax, his levies, his forced labour, his religious persecutions, and his social reforms left a terrible inheritance of discontent.

<sup>2</sup> Peter's son, Alexis, during a second absence of Peter on foreign travel, was found to have been plotting against him, and openly declared his intention of undoing all his father's reforms, surrendering his father's conquests, and disbanding the fleet. He was tried by a high tribunal and executed. Hence there was no proper heir to the throne.



Peter was succeeded on the throne—first, by his second wife Catharine Alexyeievna; then by his grandson, Peter Alexyeivitch, still a minor; thirdly, by his niece, Anna Joannovna. All these persons, though they occupied the throne, were quite incompetent to govern the State; in their place, government was carried on by the great nobles related to them, or “Favourites,” as they were called.<sup>1</sup> For a period immediately following the death of Peter the Great, under his widow and grandson, such a Favourite was found in Menshikoff, the favourite of Peter. Peter had associated with Menshikoff in his early youth, and afterwards had retained his friendship for him all his life. It was at Menshikoff’s house that he made the acquaintance of Catharine, who had been brought from Livonia as a prisoner of war. She was the daughter of humble parents<sup>2</sup>, but afterwards became his wife, and Empress of Russia.

Menshikoff was not a man of culture, but he was a prudent, competent, and energetic man, who understood the thoughts and aims of the reformer; yet at the same time avaricious and covetous. After the death of Peter the Great, Menshikoff for a time carried on affairs, as if he were Governor with plenary powers. But in the time of Peter’s grandson, the Emperor Peter II., he was driven from power by other

<sup>1</sup> As in the case of Ivan the Terrible, when the strong hand was removed, troubles followed. The boyars again got the upper hand.

<sup>2</sup> She was unable to read or write.



Favourites, who succeeded in getting the young lord into their hands. Stripped of all his power and wealth, Menshikoff ended his days in Siberia, in bitter exile. Such was the government of Russia for seventeen years. One Favourite would be driven out by another, by all manner of devices, stripped of his power, and exiled to Siberia. It need not be said that under such rulers no good could come to the State.

2. THE REGIME OF BIRON.—The worst times came in the reign of Anna Joannovna, the niece<sup>1</sup> of Peter the Great (1730–1740). The State was ruled in her name by Biron, a German, who was not only coarse, bad, and ignorant, but actually despised everything Russian, and all Russians. From the time of Peter the Great onwards there were numerous foreigners at the Russian Court, especially Germans. But Biron surrounded himself exclusively with Germans. There were some able and good men among them; but the majority were as coarse and ignorant as the Favourite himself. Life in Russia was hard indeed. Bodies of soldiers went about the villages, with the tax-collectors, ejecting from their homes people who had fallen into arrears; the money collected went to the greedy Favourite. Life in the towns was equally

<sup>1</sup> Daughter of Ivan, his elder brother. The Senate, by whom she was appointed, endeavoured to bind her by a series of regulations, limiting her powers, which they drew up for her signature; but owing to their mutual disagreements, this attempt to secure a Constitutional or oligarchical Government failed.

intolerable; Biron's spies went about peeping and eavesdropping for any expression of discontent or any symptom of conspiracy or revolt. It was enough evidence against any man if some evil or malicious person said that he knew that So-and-so was guilty of some "word or deed against the lord"; he was arrested, dragged to the secret chamber of inquisition, and compelled by torture to confess crimes which did not exist. The Empress Anna Joannovna on her death left a will appointing Biron guardian of her successor, John Antonovitch, the infant son of her niece. But Biron made himself so obnoxious to everyone that no one would continue in office under him. Not a month had passed after the death of the Empress when he was arrested by the German Field-Marshal Münnich,<sup>1</sup> with a handful of soldiers of the guard. The Favourite was banished to Siberia, and now every Russian was longing with all his heart for one and the same thing—a lord who loved Russia and everything Russian. A person there was, capable of satisfying this desire: the youngest daughter of Peter the Great, Elizabeth Petrovna.

3. ELIZABETH PETROVNA. — The Empress Elizabeth desired to rule the State in such a way that her subjects should remember that she was

<sup>1</sup> Münnich had commanded the Russian army in a war with the Turks, defeating them notably at Khotin (1739), a battle which formed the subject of Lomonosoff's first ode. Unfortunately, he supported the infant John's claims against Elizabeth, and was exiled to Siberia, to be recalled—with Biron—twenty years later, by Peter III.

her father's daughter. She strove to follow the example of Peter I., and to continue the work he had begun.<sup>1</sup> But she had not the strength to extend the reforms inaugurated by the great Tsar. Neither the Empress herself, nor the people with whose assistance she performed the duties of government, possessed either the wisdom or the character with which Peter I. was endowed. Hence the reign of Elizabeth did not produce any great reforms, or great changes, in the State. But she knew how to surround herself with wise advisers, devoted to Russia; so that her accession brought rest to the State from the hard years of the government by Favourites and German domination. For the whole of her reign of twenty years (1741-1761) the Empress Elizabeth enjoyed the enduring love of her subjects, which was maintained by her own good qualities. It is said that on her accession to the throne she made a promise that she would put no one to death. She carried out her promise; not a single execution took place during her reign. The cruel tortures<sup>2</sup> by which Russian justice since Tartar times had extorted the truth from those suspected of crime entirely disappeared.

Elizabeth imitated her father in making it her

<sup>1</sup> But part she undid, when the nobility were legally separated from the classes which he allowed to share its privileges on condition of service to the State; and the laws of serfdom were hardened.

<sup>2</sup> Peter had abolished the public flogging of debtors; but some authors have said that he "knouted the Russians into civilization."

special care that the Russian people should depart from the old Moscovite customs, and become more like other Europeans. But she did not value those forms of learning which are beneficial to life<sup>1</sup> so highly as Peter the Great had done; the Russian people acquired such learning principally from Germans. She was more attracted by French civilization, which made life more cheerful and beautiful. In her reign everything French came into vogue among the Russians—the French language, French books, French costumes, plays and manners.

4. LOMONOSOFF.—During this epoch the Russian people made further progress in culture. It was in the reign of Elizabeth that Lomonosoff flourished. His parents were ordinary peasants, of Archangel; but he succeeded in making himself a remarkably learned man and writer. Hitherto, the learned men of Russia had all been Germans. But Lomonosoff, as a learned naturalist, rose to be a teacher of the Germans themselves. The characteristic for which Russians especially hold him in high honour was this: he was the first writer to use beautiful, easy, and intelligent language. It is now very difficult to read authors prior to Lomonosoff; the Church Slavonic language was intermingled with foreign words, and the result was an uncouth and little understood phraseology. Hence Lomonosoff is called the “Father of Russian Literature.”

<sup>1</sup> She founded the first Russian University of Moscow, in 1758.

## CHAPTER IV

## THE AGE OF CATHARINE II

I. WHO CATHARINE WAS.—The Empress Elizabeth was never married. She had designated as her successor a foreigner, the son of her own sister, who had been given in marriage to a German prince. This sister had again found a wife for her son, Peter Theodorovitch, Elizabeth's nephew, in a German princess, who at the time of her conversion to the Orthodox faith was named Catharine Alexyeievna; she thus became the future Empress Catharine II. Catharine came into Russia when still in her teens, but the young German princess soon showed herself to be a woman of great wisdom. She quickly understood that as consort of the future lord of Russia it was indispensable for her to make herself a Russian. She began to work for this object with all her might; she studied the Russian language and Russian literature, and made herself acquainted with the Russian people and Russian life. She took the same pains with her own self-culture; she read, and she had herself instructed, that she might be the better prepared for the high duties required of her. At the same time, she won every heart around her by her gentle and kindly manners. On the other hand she brought Peter Theodorovitch entirely under her control. He was a



man of little ability, and of a childish character.<sup>1</sup> He did not care to know his new fatherland, and despised everything Russian; the only thing that interested him was his German soldiery. When Empress Elizabeth died, the Russian people soon perceived that no good could come to Russia from the new Emperor; and six months later Catharine (Russian, Ekaterina) Alexyevna was placed upon the throne instead of him,<sup>2</sup> under the title of Empress Catharine II.

2. THE LABOURS OF CATHARINE II. FOR THE GOOD OF HER SUBJECTS.—“Our little Mother Ekaterina” enjoyed a long reign of thirty-four years (1762–1796). Thus the eighteenth century began in Russia with the reign of Peter I., and closed with that of Catharine II. These two

<sup>1</sup> He abolished Peter I.’s compulsory service for the nobility. We shall see the results in Book V., Chapter II.

<sup>2</sup> M. Baring says that it is a mistake to suppose that public opinion did not exist as a force in Russia; “Peter had flouted public opinion, and public opinion deposed him.” There was more than this. Elizabeth had joined France and Austria in the Seven Years’ War against Frederick the Great of Prussia, and Peter had at once concluded a treaty by which all Russia’s sacrifices in the war were made fruitless. “My brother,” he would say to Frederick’s portrait, “we will conquer the universe together.” Germans were not popular in Russia. He had treated Catharine very badly, and she had long been separated from him; her life now was actually in danger, and her sympathizers organized a plot among the Guards, who were discontented owing to the severe discipline he had introduced, and to a proposed war with Denmark. The people generally were against the war, and disturbed by Peter’s attempted confiscation of Church property and harsh measures towards the clergy. The revolutionaries did their work in two hours, without loss of life, and four days later Peter “died of colic.”

reigns entirely changed Russia; from them sprang that empire which we know, and in which we live. On her accession to the throne Catharine II. was filled with the desire to do as much good as possible for her subjects. She made up her mind that the supremely important thing for the good of the State was new and good laws; and she turned her whole attention to the promulgation of such laws. But if the laws were to be good, it was indispensable that they should grant to the citizens what they needed. But the only people who could know what they needed were the citizens themselves. So Catharine resolved that her subjects should themselves have a share in the drawing up of the new laws. An Assembly was formed of persons elected<sup>1</sup> from the whole State, called Deputies; Catharine herself composed for these Deputies an "Instruction" which explained what sort of new laws were in her opinion needed. The laws had to be equitable, so that all the subjects might be equal in the eye of the law, and freedom and protection might be secured for all alike; they had to be mild; it was indispensable to abolish capital punishment and cruel penalties. So the deputies met; but so difficult a work as the establishment of new laws was beyond their powers. However, the Empress learnt through them a great deal about the condition of Russia and the needs of her subjects.

<sup>1</sup> Now we have for the first time a popularly elected body. The voters were a very small minority of the people.

3. CHANGES IN THE ORGANIZATION OF THE STATE.—Catharine now turned her thoughts away from new laws to a different aim. She resolved to improve the government of the country. Peter the Great had made important changes in the Government; Catharine II. finished his work. In her time Russia assumed the aspect which she presents to this day. The whole realm was divided into provinces,<sup>1</sup> the provinces into districts; the division, in province and in district alike, was not according to extent in area, but to population. Each province had its own provincial capital, each district its district capital. In the provincial capitals central institutions were established: first, for the administration of the province, the Provincial Government, as it was called; then, for financial and economical matters, the Treasury Office; lastly, for matters of justice, the Law Offices, civil and criminal.<sup>2</sup>

4. LABOURS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF LEARNING.—Catharine II. also did very much for the advancement of the Russian people in

<sup>1</sup> "Gubernii" ("Governments"), fifty in number. Catharine wished to do something for the serfs, but public opinion, expressed by the nobles with their now increased power, was against it; and she was alarmed by the French Revolution.

<sup>2</sup> Through a mixed commission, lay and ecclesiastical, she confiscated the Church property to the State, assigning fixed incomes for the clergy and monasteries, thus making the Church entirely subordinate to the State and finishing Peter I.'s work, which Peter III. was not strong enough to do. The monasteries "subsidized by the State" number 207 for men, 106 for women; the "supernumerary," 173 for men, 65 for women.



CATHERINE II

FROM THE PAINTING BY ROSSELIN, 1787





learning. In district cities "Public Schools" were organized; much was done also in the direction of founding various other educational institutions in the provincial towns and capitals. After this reign the number of books published yearly greatly increased, newspapers and magazines began to be issued, and printing presses to be erected, not, as hitherto, only under the Crown, but by private enterprise. Many Russian writers appeared. The Empress herself was conspicuous among the authors of her time; she left behind her various compositions written both for instruction and for diversion.

5. EXTENSION OF THE RUSSIAN FRONTIERS IN THE SOUTH.—In the reign of Catharine II. the boundaries of the Russian Empire were greatly extended both on the south and on the west. On the south, this extension was the result of a victorious war with Turkey; on the west, of the partition of Poland. After the incorporation of Little Russia the Russian territories were contiguous to the Krimea. The Tartars of the Krimea were always very troublesome neighbours. Their inroads prevented the Russian populace from settling on the steppe zone, which marched with the Tartar steppe. Meanwhile the Russian husbandman was cooped up in the northern forests, and it was essential for him to occupy the black-soil steppe to the south. It would not have been difficult for Russia to deal with the Krimea

alone; but the Krimea was under the protection of Turkey, and war with Turkey was inevitable for the sake of the Krimea. Russia in consequence carried on two great wars with Turkey in the course of Catharine's reign, both of which were successful. The Empress knew how to find capable persons for each branch of State service; her capacity was again shown by the discovery of splendid generals. Among these the most remarkable was Suvoroff. By these wars Russia acquired the whole of the steppe lying along the Black Sea, and the Krimea itself. The territory thus acquired, called New Russia, was entirely uninhabited; Catharine's friend Potemkin undertook to colonize and organize it. He succeeded admirably in his work. Settlers poured into the vacant land<sup>1</sup> of New Russia; towns, villages, and farms appeared, and roads were laid. For the protection of the Black Sea frontier a Russian fleet was established in the Bay of Sevastopol.<sup>2</sup>

6. EXTENSION OF RUSSIA ON THE WEST.—Russia was greatly extended also on the west.

<sup>1</sup> At all periods of Russian history, the prospect of "free land" has the same effect as the news of the discovery of gold in Australia or Alaska. Whole villages will uproot themselves and set out upon a long journey, too often, alas! to be disappointed.

<sup>2</sup> At the advice of the Englishman Mackenzie. Russia has now the "outlet on the Black Sea" so eagerly desired by Peter the Great. Odessa is one of the "towns" which appeared. 5,000 Cossacks emigrated to Turkey, and were lost; the rest were sent as frontier guards to Siberia. Their lands were given, with the people upon them, to Catharine's favourites.

The Russian lands to the south and west (Ukrainia and White Russia) formed part of the kingdom of Poland. But Catholic Poland oppressed the Orthodox faith;<sup>1</sup> and further, for the Russian peasantry, life was very hard under the domination of their nobility, the Polish *shlyachts*.<sup>2</sup> Hence the Russian population of Poland looked to the power of Russia for protection, and appealed to her for help. Meanwhile, Poland became thoroughly feeble. The King was elective; all power was in the hands of the prominent *pans*,<sup>3</sup> who were always quarrelling among themselves, and it was only a question of money whether each of them took the side of this one, or that, of the neighbouring States.

Under such circumstances the three neighbouring countries—Russia, Austria, and Prussia—continually interfered in Polish affairs, and finally decided to partition Poland among themselves. The first partition was effected in 1773. Two further partitions subsequently took place, until Poland entirely ceased to exist as a separate State.<sup>4</sup> By these partitions

<sup>1</sup> Especially through the influence of Jesuits, who swarmed into Poland.

<sup>2</sup> The descendants of the heads of families of the "Polyan tribe"; cf. Part I., Chapter I., § 2.

<sup>3</sup> Corresponding to the Russian "Knyaz"; cf. Part I., Chapter II., § 3.

<sup>4</sup> In 1764 Catharine secured the election to the throne of the weak King Stanislaus, and immediately demanded equal rights for the Orthodox population, as a political measure; enforcing her requirements by the presence of Russian troops at the Diet of Radom, at which the matter

Russia obtained all the country occupied by Russian settlers, except Galicia. Thus in the reign of Catharine II. the Russian Empire again included all the Russian people, as had been the case in old times, when it was still called the Grand Principality of Kieff. At the same time, Russia became one of the greatest States of Europe.<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER V

### ALEXANDER I., "THE BLESSED," AND THE WAR FOR THE FATHERLAND

1. THE PERSONALITY OF ALEXANDER I.  
—Alexander Pavlovitch, nicknamed "The Blessed," was the favourite grandson of Catharine II., the eldest son of her only son Paul Petrovitch. Alexander was richly endowed by nature with ability, beauty, and goodness. His grandmother Catharine took great pains with the bringing up of this grandson of

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was discussed. Turkey demanded their withdrawal, and declared war (1767), but her fleet was destroyed at Smyrna, and her armies defeated in the Crimea, over which Russia henceforth exercised control. In making peace, Russia had to pacify her jealous neighbours, Austria and Prussia, which was done by the partition of Poland, first suggested by Frederick the Great. The second partition (1793) occasioned a rising of the Poles, crushed by Suvoroff, in consequence of which the third partition was made, with the result described.

<sup>1</sup> A foolish war, initiated by Gustavus III. of Sweden, ended in his utter defeat, and the destruction of his fleet by the Englishman Grieg, the Russian admiral.

hers,<sup>1</sup> so as to develop in him the good which was in him by natural heredity. Alexander grew up a really remarkable man; he won the heart of everyone who knew him. He succeeded to the throne in 1801, after the short reign of his father Paul. The young Emperor wished to follow the example of his grandmother, and to consecrate his life to the good of his State and his subjects. With his young friends he threw himself zealously into the work of the State, and endeavoured to improve it. Above all the Emperor Alexander busied himself with the Interior Government. Instead of Peter's Departments, he instituted Ministries,<sup>2</sup> which exist to this day. Each branch of State affairs had its own Ministry, at the head of which stood a Minister, who had to be responsible to the Emperor<sup>3</sup> for his own Ministry; the Ministries were those of War, of Naval Affairs, of Internal Affairs, of Foreign Affairs, of Popular Education, of Judgment or Justice, of Finance, and of Commerce. Further, Alexander took much thought for the enlightenment of Russia. His chief care was for progress to a higher culture. In his time several universities were founded (Moscow must not be counted among these, as it was founded

<sup>1</sup> Catharine was always afraid that her son Paul might be set on the throne instead of her, and kept him in retirement. He seems to have been slightly insane, and met his death by assassination.

<sup>2</sup> "Ministerstva," instead of "Collegia" (p. 93).

<sup>3</sup> Hence the continually increasing demand of the next century for a Popular Assembly, to which, instead of to the Emperor, the Ministers should be responsible.



earlier, in the reign of Elizabeth); for middle education, high schools were established in the provincial cities.

2. FOREIGN AFFAIRS.—The Emperor Alexander, however, accomplished far less than he expected for the internal organization of Russia. He was hindered by external affairs—that is to say, the relations of Russia with other countries. Under Catharine II. Russia occupied such an important position among the European Powers, that it was difficult for her not to be brought into their affairs. Appeals were constantly being made to her by one country after another, with requests for protection or support. At this juncture affairs all over Europe were in a seriously complicated state; the Emperor of the French, Napoleon Bonaparte, was conquering one country after another, until the turn came of Russia's immediate neighbours, Prussia and Austria. Alexander I. considered it inevitable that he should interfere, to protect his neighbours, but his support was of no avail.<sup>1</sup> Napoleon conquered both these powerful countries. Immediately it became possible for Russia herself to be gravely menaced. But Napoleon had no wish to threaten Russia: quite the opposite. It was to his advantage not to quarrel with the Emperor of Russia, but to be friends with him; he desired to obtain by any means in his power a personal interview with Alex-

<sup>1</sup> At Austerlitz (1805) the Russian army lost 21,000 men; Napoleon allowed the rest to retreat.



NAPOLÉON'S INTERVIEW WITH THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER AT TILSIT

FROM THE PAINTING BY ROEHN



ander, and a meeting was arranged by mutual consent. The interview took place at the town of Tilsit, on the frontiers of Russia and Prussia. At this interview Napoleon succeeded in persuading the Emperor, that through alliance and friendship with himself, peace, quiet, and order would be brought about, and that it would be good not only for his own country, but also for the whole of Europe.

An alliance with France had both advantages and disadvantages for Russia. The chief advantage was this: Russia could now incorporate the rest of Finland with that portion which had already been conquered under Peter I. and Elizabeth Petrovna. So long as the whole of Finland was not Russian, but in part a Swedish possession, it was impossible for Russia to be free from disquiet; from Finland the Swedes threatened the Russian territory on the Baltic Sea, and even the capital, Petersburg. Still, the disadvantages of the alliance were even greater. Napoleon demanded that Russia should break off her commercial relations with England, his sworn enemy; and it was sheer ruin for Russia at this time to put an end to this commerce. Russia had nowhere else to which to export her superfluous flour, flax, skins, and salt, and from nowhere else but England could she import the cloth and other manufactured goods with which she was as yet unable to supply herself. Moreover a rumour spread among the people of Russia, that Napoleon

Bonaparte was Antichrist, friendship with whom was perdition. And with all this, the French Emperor, puffed up with his conquests, treated the Russian Emperor with great insolence, like an old man dealing with a child. It was too much for Russia and her lord to put up with all this, and the alliance could not possibly hold. Indeed, it scarcely lasted for four years. In 1811 Napoleon began to make preparations for war with Russia, and in the following year the famous War for the Fatherland broke out.

3. THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR FOR THE FATHERLAND.—For this campaign in Russia Napoleon prepared such a vast army as Europe had never hitherto seen. More than half a million of soldiers formed the invading force; not only French, but also Germans, Poles,<sup>1</sup> and Italians. In June, 1812, the "Grand Army of France," under a general of genius, as Napoleon certainly was, crossed the River Niemen and advanced into Russian territory. The situation of Russia was beyond measure perilous. Her fighting men, all told, numbered only 200,000, and even these were divided into three armies, far separated from one another. Only the first army, of not more than 100,000 men in all, stood in the way of the advancing host of Napoleon, under the command of Barclay de Tolly. Beyond question, it was not in force to

<sup>1</sup> There were 60,000 of them. But he informed a Polish deputation that his agreements with Austria forbade his re-establishing their independence.



block his path. The first army began to retire, so as to give time to the second army to come up to its support. The two Russian armies joined forces before Smolensk; the French followed in close pursuit to the same town. But though the Russian armies were now united, they were still weaker than the French. The Russians abandoned Smolensk, and continued their retreat by the Moscow road. The French occupied the city, and again advanced in pursuit of the Russians.

Meanwhile, the whole country was in dire panic; the enemy was making his way to Moscow, the very heart of Russia, and the Russian army was retiring. A rumour circulated that it was retiring only because the commander-in-chief, the German Barclay de Tolly, was a traitor under the thumb of Napoleon. This assertion was made, not only by the people, but by the soldiers, to whom it was galling and offensive to leave Russian territory in the hands of the French. The Tsar knew that the rumours about the treachery of Barclay were nonsense; but as it was essential to pacify the people and the army, he appointed as Commander-in-Chief M. I. Kutuzoff. Kutuzoff, an old and experienced general, understood that Barclay's strategy was sound. Nevertheless, he perceived that under the circumstances it was impossible to admit the French into Moscow, without making an effort to stop them. They were by this time at the most 100 versts from the capital,

4. THE BATTLE OF BORODINO.—Not far from the town of Mojaïsk, in the Province of Moscow, on the plain of Borodino, a famous battle took place on August 26, 1812. Rarely does history record such terrible carnage. The Russians had not a thought for danger or death, but only remembered the one fact that the existence of their old capital, Moscow, and therewith of the whole of Russia, was at stake. Let the French press as they would, the Russians would not yield, and there was no ground given upon the field of battle in the course of that awful day. But the reckoning of dead and wounded showed that only half of the Russian army was left.<sup>1</sup> It was out of the question to lose this still effective half, and Kutuzoff again began to retire upon Moscow, followed by the French. The governor of Moscow tried to keep the populace calm, assuring them that there was no need for alarm, as the army would protect the city. But the people recognized the critical danger, and hastened out of the city. When, six days later, the French reached Moscow in pursuit of the Russian forces, the city was almost entirely deserted; everyone had refused to stay in subjection to Napoleon. Kutuzoff saw that it was no use to think of protecting the city, and that it was more important to save the army than to save the city. So the Russian army passed through Moscow, and withdrew along the road to the south; on the same day, September 2, the French entered Moscow,

<sup>1</sup> The French lost 30,000 men, the Russians 40,000.

Napoleon expected that the inhabitants would repair to him with expressions of obedience, and was astonished to the utmost to find that no one came and that the city was deserted.

5. THE FRENCH IN MOSCOW.—The Russians were shaken by the news that Moscow was occupied by the French. They thought that the downfall of Russia was at hand. The French were exultant, confident that the war was at an end, and that there only awaited them, as victors, rest, glory, and rich booty. But all turned out far otherwise. As soon as the French appeared in Moscow, the city was seen to be on fire in every quarter. The flames devoured houses, shops, merchandise, and provisions of every kind. It was with the utmost difficulty that the conflagration was arrested at all. The French, instead of finding the abundance and wealth that they expected, began to be in want even for the victualling of themselves and their horses. It was difficult to procure anything from outside the city, as scattered Russian detachments, especially of Don Cossacks, were spread all over the country, waylaying the enemy.

Napoleon at first expected that the Russians would treat for peace; then he began to send messengers himself to Alexander and Kutuzoff, to negotiate terms for the cessation of hostilities. But Alexander at the very beginning of the war had declared that there could be no word of peace so long as the enemy held any Russian

territory, and the Tsar held inflexibly to his resolution. Kutuzoff was of the same opinion, and so was the whole of the Russian people. Russia was prepared for destruction, but would not make peace. Every single man who could strike a blow came forward, either as a regular soldier or as a volunteer (a "partisan"); anyone who could not take part in the fighting sacrificed what he could for the expenses of the war. Meanwhile, autumn came on. Napoleon realized that it was impossible for him to remain for the winter in the devastated city of Moscow, in the midst of a population who were evidently his foes to the death. He resolved to evacuate Moscow.

6. THE FLIGHT OF THE FRENCH FROM MOSCOW. In the middle of October the French, laden with such supplies as they had been able to rake together, abandoned Moscow. In the interval, the Russian army had had time to rest, to refit, and to gain strength. It was now powerful enough to measure its strength with the enemy; but the experienced and cautious Kutuzoff had no wish for useless fighting and loss. He only tried to challenge the French passage by a new route, that to the south; and to compel them to return, as they had come to Moscow, by the now devastated road through Smolensk. In this he was successful. The march of the French army from Moscow was arduous in the extreme. Unaccustomed to cold, ill-clad, ill-supplied with food, the French pushed on, leaving by the



roadside a multitude of feeble, sick, and dead. The Russian armies closely followed upon their heels, falling upon them whenever it suited them. All the time the French fugitives were surrounded by swarms of citizen soldiers, Cossacks, volunteer detachments, ordinary peasants—harassing them on every side—who kept taking prisoners, and seizing their camp-waggons, with their baggage, their equipment, and their provisions. The French army, tortured by cold, by hunger, and by continual alarms, lost all appearance of an army under command, and fled in disorder.

Beyond Smolensk the retreat was more painful still; especially disastrous was the passage of the River Berezina, a tributary of the Pripet. Here the Russian army had advanced on three different fronts to intercept the French, and a multitude of the enemy were slain or drowned in crossing. Napoleon succeeded in slipping away with the scanty remains of his army. But the "Grand Army" of France was no more. Napoleon deserted the army, and reached France in safety. Cruel frosts came on, under which what was left of the army perished; those that recrossed the Niemen, leaving the territory of Russia behind them, were a mere fraction of the Grand Army. The whole of Russia breathed prayers of grateful thanksgiving, at Christmas, for the saving of the Fatherland.

7. THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER AFTER THE WAR FOR THE FATHERLAND.—The French had



been expelled from Russia, but the war did not end here. Alexander I. wished the army to undertake a foreign expedition; he considered that it was indispensable to help Europe in her struggle for freedom against Napoleon. So the Russian armies were for three years more engaged, with their European allies, against Napoleon. At the end of that time<sup>1</sup> the Russians, with their Emperor, entered Paris, the capital of France, as if in retaliation for Moscow. But the Russians, so far from injuring Paris in any way, did the very opposite; the French blessed the Russian Emperor as their protector and deliverer. So Alexander I. succeeded in his aim of setting Europe free from Napoleon.

Thereafter, he occupied himself with the task of reconstructing in Europe the old order, shattered by the conquests of Napoleon. This task greatly diverted his attention from Russia and her affairs. At the same time, in consequence of the terrible strain of the war for the Fatherland, the character of the Emperor greatly changed. He became exceedingly devout, and seemed crushed by the burden of public cares; he even desired to abdicate the throne. In 1825 he journeyed to Taganrog, to escort his sick consort, for whom the doctors had recommended a warm climate. Here he took a chill, fell sick, and died. He had no children, and, according to law, his successor should have been

<sup>1</sup> After the Battles of Dresden and Leipsic and the campaign of 1814.

his brother, Constantine Pavlovitch. But the Grand Prince Constantine declined to accept the throne, and the Imperial power passed to the brother of Alexander I. next in age—Nikolas Pavlovitch.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An insurrection organized by the secret societies which now swarmed in Russia was suppressed. Those who took part in it became known as "Dekabriks," as it took place on December 26, 1825.

## PART V

### NEW RUSSIA

#### CHAPTER I

##### NIKOLAS I., AND THE DEFENCE OF SEVASTOPOL

I. CONDITION OF RUSSIA IN THE REIGN OF NIKOLAS PAVLOVITCH.—Life in Russia during the long reign of Nikolas I. (1825–1855) was not happy; we must see the reasons for this. After Russia had crushed Napoleon,<sup>1</sup> Alexander I. considered that he was bound to finish the work, and to join the other nations of Europe in reconstructing the old order. The Emperor Nikolas was also of the opinion that it was incumbent upon him to take part in the affairs of the nations of Europe, and not to allow any alteration in their organization. To do this a great military force, which should always be in readiness, was indispensable. The maintenance of a vast army is a costly matter, and the Russia of those days was poor. Although her commerce had been greatly extended by Peter the Great, and factories and workshops had made their appearance, all that was done was insigni-

<sup>1</sup> English readers will miss any allusion to the Battle of Waterloo, in which Russian troops took no part.

ficant in comparison with the other countries of Europe. From the peasants on the soil it was equally out of the question to draw much; half of them were bound to the soil, which they worked for their landlords, and the land was badly apportioned as the result of ancient custom. In a word, a great army was not within the powers of the realm in those days.

But, besides this, the maintenance of a multitude of officials was another costly matter. Such a vast State as Russia had become since the days of Catharine II. demanded great strength for its Government. Nikolas I. desired that it should be governed only by Government agents—that is, by officials.<sup>1</sup> Only the peasants under the Crown had powers of self-government without officials; they possessed a Council ("Schod") to deal with the affairs of their community, and also elected their own elders, mayor,<sup>2</sup> and district<sup>3</sup> magistrates. The number of officials was great, and the treasury had not the means to pay them more than a very small salary; in consequence, they took bribes from any who had need of their services. Crown business in the Chancelleries was transacted in writing, and that tardily in the extreme. The people suffered from the interminable delays, as well as from the bribes required by the officials. The Tsar was aware of both these evils, and wished from the bottom of his heart to eradicate them; but

<sup>1</sup> "Chinovik."

<sup>2</sup> "Starosta" (p. 72, n.).

<sup>3</sup> "Of the volost"—group of villages.

it was difficult to do anything. Nikolas's attention was claimed by many a desirable change and reform. However, one difficult and important piece of work, at least, he accomplished: he at last succeeded in making a compilation of laws. For the first time since the publication of the Code of Tsar Alexis, all the separate laws, which had accumulated in vast numbers, were gathered together, and a Table<sup>1</sup> of Laws formed; by this the Russian Empire is guided to this day.<sup>2</sup>

2. THE KRIMEAN WAR.—The other countries and peoples of Europe, during the reign of Nikolas I., did not love Russia, and feared her—feared her on account of her enormous army, and did not love her because Russia regarded herself as the first Power of Europe, and was prone to interfere in the affairs of other States. The most powerful countries of Europe in those days were England, France, Austria, and Prussia. At the close of Nikolas's reign, England and France became the secret enemies of Russia. Austria and Prussia, though not open enemies, were not kindly disposed towards her. Her enemies awaited an opportunity to come forward in opposition to her; such an opportunity was given them in the war between Russia and Turkey.

<sup>1</sup> "Svod."

<sup>2</sup> The author does not mention the Polish War of 1830, the result of which was that Poland was declared to be a Russian province, and such constitutional rights as she enjoyed were taken away; in 1863 the Poles made a second fruitless effort to recover their freedom. Poland thenceforth was officially described as "the Vistula Provinces."



From the time of Tsar Alexis and the incorporation of Little Russia, some military action against the Turks had taken place in almost every reign. Apart from the disagreements usual between neighbours, the outstanding cause of the war was this: a large proportion of the population of Turkey consisted of Greeks, Roumanians, and Southern Slavs—that is to say, Bulgars and Serbs. When the Turks, who were Mohammedans, oppressed these Orthodox, they appealed for protection to Russia. Russia gave them such protection as she could. But hereupon the States hostile to Russia opposed Russian interference in Turkish affairs. When, in the year 1853, the Turkish war broke out, England and France came forward to the support of Turkey. Both these countries were sea Powers, their greatest strength lying in their navies. Hence their navy was far better than that of Russia; they possessed steamers, while the Russians had only sailing vessels. Hostile craft suddenly appeared on the seas surrounding Russia, and the Russians did not know which coast to defend, or how to do it. But presently the enemy concentrated all his forces upon the Crimea; his objective was to destroy Sevastopol, where the Russian fleet lay and the naval dock-yard stood.

3. THE DEFENCE OF SEVASTOPOL. — The Crimean War was disastrous in the extreme for us; the French and English routed the Russian army at every encounter. On the other hand,

the Russians exhibited such marvellous courage in the defence of Sevastopol, that they won the admiration of their very enemies. To this day, every Russian remembers with pride how his brothers of the Fatherland for eleven months defended the town against the allied armies, which included not only English and French, but Turks and Italians as well. The course of events was this. The Allies were approaching Sevastopol by sea and by land, when the commanders of the Russian fleet—Admirals Korniloff, Nachimoff, and Istomin—resolved to sink their ships; out in the open, the fleet could be of little service, but sunken vessels would block the entrance of the hostile craft into the harbour of Sevastopol. But on the land side the city was almost entirely undefended, and the enemy were approaching. The desperate work of constructing fortifications was taken in hand; every inhabitant, even women and children, toiled night and day, General Totleben directing the work, and in a few days Sevastopol was fortified.

The enemy laid siege to the city: they possessed abundance of everything—men, guns, and provisions; necessary supplies were continually being brought them by transports. They poured into Sevastopol bullets, shells, and shrapnel; they kept the city in constant alarm by unexpected assaults. The defenders fell by hundreds and thousands; all three admirals fell one after the other, while directing the

defence. But their courage never weakened, and in place of the fallen new defenders ever appeared, prepared to sacrifice their lives. Russia followed the operations at Sevastopol with tense interest; the Russian youth poured into the town as volunteers, burning to take part in the heroic defence. But there is a limit to all things, and at last it became evident that there was no hope that Sevastopol could stand longer. The enemy ordnance had destroyed the city, and the fortifications were in ruins. When the enemy at last won the Malakoff hill—a fortification standing high above the town—it was out of the question to continue the defence. In despair the inhabitants abandoned the city, into which the enemy entered. This took place at the end of August, 1855, subsequently to the death of the Emperor Nikolas I.

4. RESULTS OF THE KRIMEAN WAR.—All the people of Russia were painfully impressed by what they had seen during the Krimean War. They saw that Russia was after all not so strong as they had previously supposed. Quite the contrary; she had proved to be weaker than foreign countries, and weaker for the simple reason that she was far behind them in enlightenment. Our ships, our guns, our arms, the food and outfit of our soldiers, our care for the wounded—all these were far inferior to those of the enemy. Not only were there no railways, such as had even then been made everywhere throughout Europe, but even the ordinary

high-roads were so poor that it was difficult to transport all the necessaries for the army of the Krimea. Russia stood in sore need of changes, of reforms. Every enlightened person in Russia realized this now; the new Tsar realized it too—the successor to the throne of Nikolas I., his son Alexander II. Nikolaevitch.

## CHAPTER II

### ALEXANDER II., AND THE EMANCIPATION OF THE PEASANTS

I. THE PERSONALITY OF ALEXANDER II.—Alexander Nikolaevitch, eldest son of the Emperor Nikolas I., had been prepared from his childhood for his future exacting duties. His parents took much pains to train his mind and character in the best possible manner. In his youth the heir-apparent travelled extensively in Russia, the better to know his kingdom and his future subjects. Thenceforward the Emperor Nikolas accustomed him to affairs of State, entrusting to his care one department after another. When Alexander Nikolaevitch succeeded as Emperor in 1855, at the age of thirty-six, he took the government of the State into firm and experienced hands. He knew that it was essential to make many changes in the organization of Russia; he knew, too, that the work which he had to do, first and foremost, was the emancipation of the peasants from their position of dependence as serfs bound to the soil.



2. WHAT THIS RIGHT OF BINDING TO THE SOIL MEANT.—We have already explained, in Part III., how the right of binding to the soil arose, from the distribution of the peasants upon the land, for the maintenance of the soldiers, their landlords. To prevent the peasants from deserting their landlords, they were bound to the soil; in other words, they were not allowed to leave it, without the permission of the landlords. The peasants were in consequence terribly discontented; their discontent was deepened as the result of the revolt which was very nearly the ruin of Russia at the beginning of the seventeenth century. When the country had to some extent settled down, the peasants became entirely bound to the soil. The land was now in no sense theirs, but their lord's; their lord might dispose of his wretched peasants as he thought fit, while any peasant who left the land without the permission of his landlord was regarded as a criminal and severely punished. The life of the peasants, whether under the Crown or under a landlord, was hard in the time of Peter the Great; they were ground down by taxes, by compulsory service in the army, and by various other requirements demanded of them by the treasury.

At the same time, under Peter the lot of the nobles was not an easy one. Peter required of them that for their whole life, so long as their vigour lasted, they should serve the State, either in military or in civilian service. Above



all, he required of them learning; an illiterate noble was put upon an equality with an ordinary taxpayer. This was no doubt burdensome, but it was just. But after the reign of Peter the Great the conditions were altered. The service rendered to the State by a noble became continually lighter, until these men were entirely freed from obligatory service, under the successor of the Empress Elizabeth, Peter III. On the other hand, the condition of the peasants became continually more deplorable. Their dependence upon their landlords increased; they now became, as it were, chattels of their lords, who could expel them from their land, uproot them from their families, punish them at pleasure, hand them over to be soldiers, or banish them to Siberia.

But the peasants remembered the origin of the right of binding to the soil. When the nobles obtained their liberty—that is, freedom from obligatory service to the State—the peasants likewise began to expect liberation from service to the nobles. But there was no liberty for them. In the reign of Catharine II. the peasants of the Volga district, joining with the Cossacks of the Don, and their hetman Pugacheff, raised a serious revolt;<sup>1</sup> it was with the utmost difficulty

<sup>1</sup> The revolt was organized by the Raskolnik—"schismatic"—monasteries. Pugacheff's proclamations promised the people "with the cross and with the beard, cheap salt and free land, meadows, and fisheries." The persecutions of Sophia and Peter I. bore their fruit, in combining the forces of religious and social discontent.

that the State coped with Pugacheff's followers. The Emperors Alexander and Nikolas Pavlovitch both regarded the right of binding to the soil as the height of injustice. They endeavoured to lighten the condition of the serfs by various measures, but they could not make up their minds to liberate the peasants at one stroke, for fear of throwing the whole country into a state of commotion. Alexander Nikolae-vitch determined to take this step.

3. HOW THE EMANCIPATION OF THE PEASANTS CAME ABOUT.—All the best people of Russia of the day, the educated, the wise, and the good, were as keenly anxious to see the emancipation of the peasants as the Emperor himself. No change for the better, they considered, could be effected in Russia so long as half the peasantry were not regarded as people in any true sense. But the Tsar expected the nobles to begin the work of emancipation themselves, of their own free will, without an edict from him. There were not a few nobles who understood the injustice of the right of binding to the soil, and were prepared to renounce it. But the majority persisted in their opposition, and dreaded the emancipation of the peasants; it appeared to them that it would mean the absolute ruin of the nobles. But there was no help for it; something had to be done, as everyone knew that the Tsar was inflexibly resolved to abolish the right of binding to the soil. The nobles began to

meet in "Provincial Committees" to consider what to do and how to do it. At the same time, the Government in Petersburg organized an "Editorial Commission," to deliberate with its supporters upon the difficult task. The workers upon the "Editorial Commission" were persons who were keenly desirous, not only to emancipate the peasants, but, better still, to make their rights secure when emancipated. Chief among these persons was Ya. I. Rostovtseff, who enjoyed the close friendship of the Emperor. The Grand Prince Constantine Nikolaevitch, the Emperor's brother, and the Grand Princess Elena Pavlovna, his aunt, wholeheartedly sympathized with the emancipation, and helped in every way they could. The nobles opposed to emancipation raised all sorts of scarecrows; the ignorant, unenlightened peasants, at the first whisper of freedom, would be plunged into commotion, and a new era of Pugacheff would begin. But nothing of the sort took place. On the contrary, the peasants kept absolutely quiet, and waited patiently until the Government decided their fate. At last on February 19, 1861, the Emperor Alexander II. signed a decree for the abolition of the right of binding to the soil. The decree closed with these words: "Sign yourselves with the Christian sign of the Cross, ye Orthodox people, and invoke, with us, the blessing of God upon your free labour." Everywhere, as the decree was received, it was welcomed with the rejoicings



CATHEDRAL OF ST. ISAAC, PETROGRAD





of an Easter Sunday;<sup>1</sup> every bell was pealed, old enemies embraced one another, and congratulated one another on the joyful news of "Freedom."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "It is only heathen and Turks who do not rejoice on Easter Sunday" (Stepniak). After the midnight Mass, the bells are pealed, and men embrace each other with the words, "Christ is risen."

<sup>2</sup> Alexander's reforms proved unavailing. "To provide the peasants with means to satisfy their needs, and enable them to meet their obligations to the State (*i.e.*, to pay their taxes) the peasants will receive in permanent possession allotments of arable lands," the edict ran. The allotments were to be taken from the great estates, for which a scheme of compensation was to be drawn up. But this was never done, and the apportionment was far too small—three or four desyatins for a family, when twenty were needed; and this amount has gradually grown smaller. The aim was to restore to the Mir (the village, represented by its council) its rights over the land. For the land in Russia has never been recognized as belonging to private owners; it has always been held nominally by the Mir in common, work, and work alone, being the sole ground on which it may be held. The Mir apportioned it, making frequent changes, so that no one family might hold a good or a bad piece of land continuously.

But economic and aristocratic influences were too strong, and subsequent legislation, instead of finishing, has undone Alexander's work. The heavy annual losses on the railways and similar undertakings are paid by the State out of the taxes. As 80 per cent. of the population lives on the land, and pays 80 per cent. of the taxes, it is the peasants who pay the capitalists' dividends. A great petition in 1871 to substitute a graduated income-tax for the land-tax was turned down as being "revolutionary." It is calculated that the average peasant can only get 200 days' food from his land; for the rest, and for his taxes, he must hire himself out to a landowner, at any price he can get for his services. The taxes are continually increasing, amounting to anything up to 200 per cent. of the possible produce in an average year, and by no means all years are average years in the Russian climate; and the issue of paper money has continually depreciated the money value of the crops—a thing the peasant cannot understand. In 1885, in one single district, 1,500 persons were condemned to be flogged for

4. WHAT THE EMANCIPATED PEASANTS OBTAINED.—The nobles wished the peasants to be emancipated without land—that is, that all land upon which peasants were settled or working should be acknowledged as belonging to the nobles. But the Government saw that peasants without land would fall into poverty, and would again become completely dependent upon the owners. However, it did not wish to give offence to the nobles, who were accustomed to regard all the land as their own. The method adopted was this: the peasants were granted by apportionment so many desyatins<sup>1</sup> per head as circumstances allowed—as many as were necessary for the maintenance of a home. They were under compulsion to dig or to plough this land. The capital necessary for its purchase

non-payment of taxes. So the crops must be sold, though starvation threatens, for what the rapacious travelling agent will give in paper money; and then the cattle, without which the land is useless; next comes in the moneylender—the “Mir-eater”—who will “do the peasant this service” at interest often amounting to hundreds per cent., on a bond of so many days’ service a week, for any length of time, or for every day’s work—in other words, absolute slavery. The insolvent debtor and the slave are as they were in the days of the *Russkaya Pravda*. Of such slaves there were, in 1886, 20,000,000: more than all the serfs emancipated in 1861. This bondage labour is of course very bad; only 21 per cent. of the land is cultivated, while the produce, owing to want of capital and bad cultivation, is about one-eighth, in proportion, of that of England. The rural death-rate is 62 per thousand (in England, 18); the able-bodied recruits went down in nine years from 1874 from 71 to 59 per cent.—simply as the result of starvation, in a country which could support 500 million souls.

<sup>1</sup> 2·7 acres.

was supplied to the peasants on a loan from the treasury, repayment to be made in a term of forty-nine years. Peasants who possessed their own land obtained the same rights of self-government as had been granted to the peasants under the Crown in the reign of Nikolas I. They could assemble in meetings<sup>1</sup> of village<sup>2</sup> and district.<sup>3</sup>

## CHAPTER III

### OTHER REFORMS IN THE REIGN OF ALEXANDER II

1. ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM.—As soon as the peasants were emancipated the Government turned its attention to the question of improving the administration. In the reign of Nikolas Pavlovitch all affairs were under the management of officials, including the financial affairs of each locality, whether district or provincial. But it was clear that those who lived in a locality knew their own needs far better than officials. So now it was decided to hand over the charge of the various needs of each locality to its own inhabitants. They had to take charge of roads, public schools,<sup>4</sup> medical treatment of people and domestic stock, insurance against fire, and provision of food in case of failure of the harvest.

<sup>1</sup> "Schod."

"Selo" = "Mir."

<sup>3</sup> "Volost," group of villages.

<sup>4</sup> In 1868, out of 105 peasant recruits, 8 could read and write; in 1882, 20. Hence the terrible influence of the Government official over the village and district councils,

The institutions which saw to all these affairs were called provincial and district general institutions. Everyone could participate in the benefits of these institutions who possessed, according to the assessment of the district, land or any other immovable property, merchandise, or industrial business. All such people might elect from among themselves "Councillors" into the District General Council.<sup>1</sup> In the District General Councils councillors were elected into the Provincial General Council.<sup>2</sup> District and Provincial Councils alike were convened for a short time each year. Further, the District Council elected out of its own number a District General Board of Management, which saw to the affairs of its district; in the same way, the Provincial Council elected out of its own number a Provincial General Board of Management, which was always standing, to take charge of the territorial affairs of the whole province. Thus the populace obtained self-government in regard to the domestic affairs in each locality. The towns also obtained self-government of the same kind.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Sobranie," like our Rural Councils.

<sup>2</sup> Like our County Councils; commonly called "zemstvos."

<sup>3</sup> There were 34 provinces and 360 districts, both of enormously varying size; the average being for a province 32,000, for a district 7,000, square miles. Voters were divided into three classes—peasants, landowners, and owners of fixed property. As private land elected twice as many councillors as peasant land, the landowning interest was predominant; but no one group might have a majority over the other two. The relations of the two executive



2. REFORM OF JUSTICE.—Ever since the days of the domination of Moscow the people of Russia had suffered much from the bad system of justice, owing to the impossibility of finding just dealings in the courts. The vovodes and petty magistrates, the Moscow functionaries with their secretaries and under-secretaries, all counted on getting income and maintenance for themselves out of the law-courts, and laboured little for justice. The courts of Government officials, instituted in the time of Peter the Great, were no better. Apart from the fees, which it was indispensable to pay to the judges, these courts were still burdened with the intolerable delays which occurred in putting through business; delays caused by the rule that every case must be conducted by departmental correspondence. An accused person would languish in prison for long years, before the correspondence at last reached his case, and it came up for decision. Even then the decision was often the reverse of justice. A criminal would be acquitted, because he was able to pay the judges well for his acquittal; an innocent man would be condemned, because he could not give bribes.

The people of Russia longed for a different system. So the Emperor Alexander II. at last gave to Russia "a court, speedy, just, merciful, boards were left undetermined; and unfortunately the Government administrative system was allowed to continue side by side with that of the councils, producing endless friction.



and equal for all subjects." For the less serious cases, courts of amicable arrangement were established; for the more important, circuit courts, civil and criminal. The new court was "speedy" in its procedure; the parties gave a verbal account of their case in the court, and this was then and there investigated and decided. The court was a "just" court; its judges were well-educated men, in a perfectly secured position, who would not pervert justice for the sake of money. Further, it was open to anyone who desired to be present in the court, and see that all was done in accordance with truth and right. Besides this, the more serious criminal charges were investigated by assessors under oath; every citizen was bound to act as an assessor in his turn. Such a court, with assessors under oath, was, finally, a "merciful court." The assessors decided whether the accused were guilty or not guilty, and they had the right to decide this according to their own consciences.<sup>1</sup> Thus they were able to declare "not guilty" even a man who had actually committed a crime, if they saw that the crime had been the result of misfortune or of mistake, and not of the bad will of the criminal. On these grounds the assessors might crave indulgence for the criminal, if he deserved it. This means, that the question of guilt is decided, not by the judges, but by the assessors; the judges only award the penalty

<sup>1</sup> "Of all nations the Russian alone is convinced that there exists no man that is absolutely guilty, as there is none who is absolutely innocent" (Gogol).

according to the laws. Much evil was abolished, and much good was introduced by the new court into the life of the country.<sup>1</sup>

3. REFORM OF MILITARY OBLIGATION.—From the time of Peter the Great onwards the army consisted of soldiers who were levied, as recruits under conscription, from the taxpaying class—that is, of peasants and burghers. Conscription weighed heavily upon the people. A young man taken as a soldier was altogether lost to the land; his relatives mourned for a recruit as for one dead. When he returned home, after twenty-

<sup>1</sup> Here again Alexander's reforms have proved unavailing. He sought merely to improve and legalize the old system of justice of the village assembly, under its starosta and elders, with its power of electing the judges of the volost. It acted in the spirit of equity, in the interests of the Mir, if not in accordance with the letter of the law, with which it had small acquaintance, as few of its members could read or write. But presently the "Mir-eating" moneylender began to secure his place of influence in the village court; and next, a crowd of Government officials were introduced—the chinovnik, with his endless books, reports, and letter-writing; the pissar, or secretary, supposed to inform the starosta as to the law, appointed from the lower orders of ex-students, lest a man of education should organize "revolt"; the judge of instruction, to direct the assessors; the ispravnik, or police officer, to put down "revolt" in case the peasants' wrongs should cry too loudly to High Heaven ("the ispravniks, thanks to the powers they have received, have transformed the elected officers of the rural Governments into their submissive servants, who are more dependent upon them than are the soldiers of the police stations," the report of the Provincial Councils declared). To the peasant, these were as bad as the Collegia, the Chancelleries, or any of the previous bodies, regarding him simply as a tax-paying chattel, existing only to be exploited in the interests of the capitalist and of the Government.

five years of military service, a soldier was past being of any benefit to his own family, and often was a burden to it. A man of the taxpaying class who was able to pay could escape conscription by hiring another to take his place. Under such circumstances the burdensome military obligation fell upon just that part of the population which, even without it, was overburdened already. Alexander II. devised a scheme for a thorough reform of this unjust state of things. "All ought to take their share in the defence of the Fatherland"; such was his opinion, and that of the best men of his time as well. In all the other States of Europe military service was compulsory for all citizens alike; this ought to be the rule in Russia also.

So we find that, in 1874, a statute was issued dealing with universal military obligation. Under this new law all young men of twenty-one years of age, without distinction of class, were called up for military service. Part of those called up, chosen by ballot, were taken for active service at the front; the other part, not so required, was enrolled in the militia. The term of service was fixed at a far lower number of years, six only; and even that term was further shortened for those who possessed education. Thus military obligation ceased to be the period of misery for the people—for the taxpaying class—that it had hitherto been.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Russian folk-songs contain many "recruiting songs," all of a deeply sad character.

## CHAPTER IV

THE WAR FOR THE EMANCIPATION OF THE  
SLAVS, AND THE ACQUISITION OF NEW TERRITORY

I. THE WAR FOR THE EMANCIPATION OF THE SLAVS.—It has been shown in an earlier chapter that the Southern Slavs—*i.e.*, the Serbs and Bulgarians, together with the rest of the Orthodox population of Turkey—continually appealed to Russia as their protector against the Turks. On their side, not only the Government, but the whole Russian people, considered themselves bound to help their Orthodox kinsfolk. During the reign of Alexander II., half-way through the 'seventies, the Serbs rose against the Turks, and Bulgaria was in a state of commotion in consequence. The Turks were anxious to intimidate the Bulgarians, to prevent the rising in Bulgaria from increasing. Numbers of their settlements were laid waste, and more than 10,000 Bulgarians were butchered man by man, with women and children, in various places. When the news of this brutality reached Russia the Russians were deeply stirred. Everyone longed in one way or another to help the revolting Serbs. For the sake of the Slavs willing sacrifices were made not only by the rich and educated people, who knew well what was being done in Serbia and Bulgaria, but also by the ordinary folk, whose ears had been reached only by vague rumours. Numbers



of the Russian youth went as volunteers, to help their "brother Slavs" in their struggle for freedom; doctors, surgeons, and Sisters of Mercy made their way to the scene of suffering. The Government was unwilling to interfere in the matter; it was too much occupied with internal affairs—reforms in the State. But the whole Russian commonalty was so anxious to help the Slavs that at last the Government had to yield, and war was declared upon Turkey in 1877. The first operations of the war were exceedingly successful. The Russian armies quickly advanced from the River Danube to the Balkans, and occupied the passes, that of Shipka and others, leading to the southern side of the mountains. But more formidable obstacles lay beyond. The Russians could not pass through the Balkans so long as they left in their rear the flower of the Turkish army, which had fortified itself in the town of Plevna, and from there made continual sorties. Nothing could be done with Plevna until reinforcements arrived from Russia. When Plevna was at last taken, winter was far advanced, and the passage of the Balkans was only effected in the face of enormous difficulties. However, the Russians were not stopped by these difficulties, and passed through the mountains. Now the whole situation was eased; town after town, division after division, surrendered, and soon the Russians appeared close to Constantinople, the capital of Turkey. Turkey sued for peace; but now other European countries interfered in



the matter. They had no wish to see Russia strengthened at the expense of Turkey. A new war might well have broken out, but peaceable counsels prevailed. Representatives of the Great Powers of Europe—England, Austria, and Germany—with those of Russia and Turkey, met in conference at Berlin (the Berlin Congress, 1878). Turkey made certain concessions to Russia, but these were far less than what Russia might have demanded. True, Serbia was recognized as an independent State. But in regard to Bulgaria, the country whose fate specially interested the Russians, the arrangement made was this: only part of Bulgaria was freed from dependence upon Turkey, and that not completely. Every Russian was discontented to a degree with these decisions of the Berlin Congress.<sup>1</sup>

2. EXTENSION OF THE RUSSIAN DOMINIONS BY WAY OF COLONIZATION; PACIFICATION OF THE CAUCASUS.—As early as the sixteenth century, in the reign of Ivan the Terrible, the Russian State had begun to extend southwards and eastwards. The Russian agriculturists were cooped up in the northern forests, and readily emigrated to the fertile steppe-land of the south. But for a long time their settlement here, on the black steppe-land, was hindered by Tartar and other nomads.

<sup>1</sup> They were attributed to Bismarck's influence, and caused Russia to cultivate friendship with France rather than with Germany, and so led to the alliance which existed when the Great War broke out.

Under Catharine II. Russia reached the Black Sea, and included the whole of the black-soil steppe. Now there was only one unquiet zone, that lying between the Black and Caspian Seas, cut in two by the Caucasus range. In these mountains wild mountain tribes had from time immemorial found a refuge—Circassians, Ossetes, and others. There was no passage through the mountains into Trans-Caucasia, where lived the Georgians,<sup>1</sup> whom Russia had taken under her wing. Moreover, it was impossible for the Russian settlers to live near the mountains. The mountain tribes were brave and warlike, delighting to fall upon their Russian neighbours and plunder them; and they were full of confidence that they were perfectly secure among the mountains. It was absolutely necessary for Russia to impose quiet upon the mountain men. This arduous work had been undertaken earlier, in the reign of Nikolas Pavlovitch; now, in that of Alexander II., it was completely finished. Roads were laid to the towns; the forests in which the mountaineers took refuge were cut down, forts were built and garrisoned, Russian order was established everywhere, and the Caucasus became peaceful. Now it was possible for Russians to live undisturbed in the Cis-Caucasus, in the mountains, and in the Trans-Caucasus alike.

<sup>1</sup> Their relations with Russia go back to 1492, from which time they continually asked for Russian help against Persia. In 1793 the Persians took and destroyed Tiflis, and in 1801 Georgia was incorporated with Russia.

### 3. EXTENSION OF TERRITORY EASTWARDS.—

As the Russian domains extended southwards, they extended simultaneously eastwards. On the north-east, Siberia had long been occupied by Russians, right across to the Pacific Ocean. In the reign of Alexander II. China made a further cession in this district to Russia, of the banks of the Amur and its tributary the Ussuri. Thus Russia took possession of a vast space of unoccupied land in the Far East, in which Russian peasants could settle in any number, in the event of a deficiency of land. Affairs in the south-east, in the region of Central Asia, fell out otherwise. The Russians, as they moved eastwards, had long ago crossed the River Ural, into the Kirgiz steppes. The Kirgiz nomads acknowledged the authority of Russia. But further to the south-east lay three small Mussulman States (Khanates): Kokan, Buchara, and Khiva. It was difficult to reach them, as there were sandy deserts to pass through. Thus protected by their situation, the inhabitants of these Khanates were continually falling upon the Russian border settlements, traders, and manufacturers. Their attacks were made partly for the sake of plunder, partly, and more frequently, to carry off Russians as prisoners. Those whom they took prisoner they either compelled to work for themselves, or sold as slaves in the markets of Central Asia. This meant terrible misery for the inhabitants of the Russian frontierland.

It was absolutely necessary for the State to interfere for the protection of her subjects. Much effort was expended on this undertaking in the reign of Emperor Nikolas I.; it was completed in that of Alexander II.

The advance to Khiva was especially difficult, surrounded as it was on every side by trackless sands. But in the end all three Khanates were reduced to full dependence upon Russia. The savage nomads of the desert and the steppe were kept under control, and order and safety established. Now the Russian people could settle quietly in the country, where not long before they had not dared to show their faces, for fear of imperilling their liberty and life. Now Russian settlers in need of land could emigrate there; amid deserts and sands there was abundance of splendid fertile land, suitable for cultivation.

## CHAPTER V

### DEATH OF EMPEROR ALEXANDER II

ON March 1, 1881, Russia was shaken by terrible news. The Emperor Alexander II. had fallen a victim to an attempt upon his life. As the Tsar was driving through the street, a bomb was thrown under his carriage. When he rose from among the shattered fragments of the conveyance, a second bomb was thrown at his very feet; on the same day the Lord of Russia expired.

On the death of Alexander II., his son Emperor Alexander III., Alexandrovitch, succeeded to the throne; his son Nikolas II., Alexandrovitch, is our present Emperor and Tsar.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M. Ephimenko, as a wise historian, knew that it is impossible to view contemporary events from a true perspective; and the disturbed state of Russia made it impossible for him to offer any observations, or even to make a selection of salient facts, without danger of bringing himself into conflict with one or other group of reformers, or possibly with the Government. "Our present Emperor" of course refers to the date of publication (1912).



## TRANSLATOR'S APPENDIX

### EVENTS SINCE THE DEATH OF ALEXANDER II

I. THE REIGN OF ALEXANDER III. (1881-1894).—The death of Alexander II. was brought about through the action of political secret societies, which since the Dekabrist rising of 1825 had continued to flourish in Russia, with the object of limiting the autocratic power of the Government by securing better representation of the people; though there was no clear idea of how this was to be brought about, and many aimed at anarchy rather than good government. On the very morning of his death the Tsar had signed an edict appointing commissions to inquire into the reform of different branches of the administration. But Alexander III., in alarm at what appeared to be the revolutionary tendencies which had caused his father's death, even took away from the local governments such powers as they had, by imposing upon them Government officials, and strengthened the old autocratic régime. He wished to make all Russia uniform, with her many different peoples, religions, languages, and administrations, and therefore abolished the systems of government in the incorporated countries, which had come down to them from past centuries. He strengthened the Orthodox Church, and laid heavy burdens upon the Raskolniks, the Lutherans of the Baltic provinces, the Roman Catholics of Poland, and the Mohammedans. The Jews<sup>1</sup> especially were severely treated. The Russian

<sup>1</sup> The Jews, as traders and moneylenders, have always been unpopular in Russia.

language alone could be used in the tribunals, and to some extent in the schools. All this was felt to be very hard in such countries as Finland and Poland, as it did away with their nationality; and among those who desired greater liberty for the people discontent deepened. The spread of education had given the Russians higher ideals of what good government meant, and not only discontented people of no education, but accomplished and careful writers were issuing books and pamphlets, explaining the true state of affairs, and supporting their arguments by facts and figures. The condition of the peasants continued to grow worse, though many railways were laid, not for military purposes, but to develop the country, and factories were built, until about 2,000,000 operatives were employed in them. Thus there were now four great classes in the State: the landowners and officials, the merchants and capitalists, the operatives, and the peasants. The operatives were anxious to secure better conditions of life; the peasants desired "all the land for those who labour on it." The other two classes were generally opposed to change; but there were many enlightened men, including many members of the zemstvos, who were eager for reform in social, agrarian, and political matters alike.

2. FOREIGN AFFAIRS.—The Russian Empire was increased in Central Asia by about 400,000 square miles in this reign. Advance in the direction of Afghanistan was stopped by England, whose Indian possessions were imperilled. The Tsar saw that danger threatened from Germany, and therefore established friendly relations with France.

3. THE REIGN OF NIKOLAS II. (1894-1917).—Alexander died in 1894, and his son Nikolas II. continued his policy of Russification, though with somewhat greater

moderation. He was anxious to improve the condition of the people, but his advisers were not good, and the power of the officials too great. When the zemstvos presented a petition, asking him to hear the voice of the people, he sternly reproved them. Yet he was a humane man, and invited the Great Powers to a conference, to prevent any further wars. In spite of this, Russia herself was the cause of the next great war. The occasion was this: Nikolas always kept the advance of Russia eastwards steadily in view, and the Siberian Railway to Vladivostock was finished. But Vladivostock is ice-bound for a great part of the year, and Russia needed a port farther south, in Manchuria. In 1895, when Japan had defeated China in war, Russia joined with France and Germany in forbidding Japan to annex any Chinese territory on the mainland; in 1898 she herself obtained from China the lease of Port Arthur, a Chinese stronghold built for the protection of Peking, which Japan had claimed, and began to extend her railways through Manchuria.

4. THE WAR WITH JAPAN.—Japan regarded those measures as a menace to herself, and in 1904 war was declared. The Russians had to bring all their troops and supplies by the Siberian Railway; and their fleet had to make a voyage of 14,000 miles to reach the scene of operations. The Japanese at first concentrated their attacks upon Port Arthur, of which the Russians had made what was thought to be an impregnable fortress, but it fell after a six months' siege. The Russian fleet was met by the Japanese after its long voyage off the Island of Tsushima, and entirely destroyed; while at the Battle of Mukden the Russian army was defeated. Peace was signed, by which Russia ceded to Japan half the island of Saghalien, and renounced all claim to any Manchurian territory.

5. EVENTS AFTER THE WAR WITH JAPAN.—As after the Crimean War (Part V., Chapter I., § 4), “the Russian people . . . saw that after all Russia was not so strong as she had supposed.” They had despised their enemies, and the officers and organizers of the army were found to have been unworthy of trust. It was hoped that the war would unite the people, but it had the opposite effect, as it deepened the distress in the country, and was thought to have been undertaken without sufficient reason. The zemstvos had been doing good work in education, medical relief, agricultural improvements, and finance; but their efforts were constantly repressed, and gradually they were compelled to make political rather than social reform their chief aim. Some reformers desired revolution with violence, and confiscation of all property by the State; these were called Bolsheviks. Others, called Mensheviks,<sup>1</sup> wished to preserve the Constitution, and proceed more slowly, by legal methods; hence they asked only for such things as greater power for the zemstvos, a freely elected National Assembly, extension of the franchise, a ministry responsible not only to the Emperor, but to the National Assembly, and freedom of speech and of the press.

6. THE REVOLUTION OF 1905.—In January, 1905, a number of workmen who came to present a petition to the Tsar were shot down. The Government began to give way under the indignation that this caused, and in August the order was given for the election of a Duma,<sup>2</sup> but with power only to advise the Emperor as to necessary laws. This could not meet requirements, and in October a strike of all classes, accompanied by

<sup>1</sup> “Bolshe,” “most,” and “menshe,” “least”; called so either from the nature of their respective demands, or from the accident that at a certain conference the extremists were in the majority.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 11.



violent disturbances, occurred all over the country. This was followed by an armed rising in Moscow. So the Duma's powers were widened, and it was now to be elected by all, with certain qualifications, above twenty-five years of age. But there was only one representative for every 250,000 people, and the voting power was very unequally distributed. The Duma was still subject to the Council of State, composed of officials appointed by the Emperor, and four days before it met it was forbidden to do anything contrary to the "Fundamental Laws," which might mean anything the Government wished.

7. THE DUMA.—The first Duma met in May, 1906, and issued a programme of reform, for which it was rebuked by the Emperor; after two months it was dissolved, because it produced a Land Bill, and the strikes and agitation continued. The second demanded still wider reforms, and again was helpless against the Council of State. It sat for three months in 1907. Then the Emperor not only reduced the number of representatives, so that many wide districts had none, but also cut out half of the peasants from voting, intending to make the next Duma more subservient. However, no serious uprising now took place. The Bolsheviks and Mensheviks could not unite, as their aims and methods were different. The strikes had done much harm, and shown that the way of violence could not really benefit the country, and the people were cowed by the cruel measures of repression adopted by the Government. Some concessions in regard to land were made to the peasants, and the moderate people were content for the present with what had been gained. The third Duma (1907) effected some improvements in education, national defence, and the administration of justice. The fourth met in 1912, but once more it became clear that the



Emperor and his Government were resolved that no real reforms should be effected. Again, therefore, disturbances broke out in many parts of the country. But now affairs in Europe were again as complicated as in the time of Napoleon, and Germany was threatening the peace of the world. In 1914 Germany and Austria imposed upon Serbia impossible terms of satisfaction for the murder of an Austrian prince. Serbia was not only a Slav and an Orthodox nation, with whom Russia had shown sympathy before (Part V., Chapter IV.), but it was indispensable for Russia to prevent the Germanic nations from threatening Russia and Russian commerce on the Black Sea, and getting Constantinople into their hands. And as France was threatened by Germany, Russia and France had to go to war together. When Germany broke the treaty by invading Belgium, England also joined the Allies, and gave Russia very great help in money and munitions.

8. THE GREAT WAR.—The war opened well for Russia. She advanced against Germany into East Prussia, and against Austria to the Carpathian Mountains; these advances were of enormous value to the Allied cause, as the German troops had to be drawn off from the western front, but the Russians met with a severe defeat at the Battle of Tannenberg.<sup>1</sup> A German invasion of Poland, however, was beaten off; many of the Poles, whom the Germans expected to welcome them as deliverers, remained true to Russia. Then the Germans concentrated their forces farther south, and threatened to break the Russian line. The Russians were compelled to withdraw, as they had no equipment to meet the German guns. Warsaw fell, and Poland was overrun

<sup>1</sup> So the Germans call it, considering that the memories of their defeat at Tannenberg in 1410 (Part III., Chapter II., § 3) are now wiped out.

by the enemy. A treaty was signed by the Poles at Brest, by which the Germans gained entire domination in Poland, over which they established a Government of their own officials.

9. THE REVOLUTION OF 1917.—The valour of the Russians had enabled them to win many victories, but an army needs supplies of guns, munitions, food, and equipment, without which no courage can avail against engines of war. These things were lacking; and when it was asked why, it proved that these hundreds of thousands of brave lives had been thrown away, not so much for the want of railway to carry them (though this had been one of the great difficulties of Russia from the beginning), but because the Government officials had stolen or mismanaged the money and the resources entrusted to them. The supplies of food, too, were very badly distributed, and the sufferings of the people, as well as of the soldiers, were great. So in 1915 the Duma again pressed its demands for an elected Ministry, responsible to itself, and more efficient for war. But nothing was done, and discontent still further increased. In March, 1917, a rebellion broke out in Petrograd, and the soldiers joined the people. The Emperor, who was at the headquarters of the army, was warned of the danger, but did not move; the Duma elected a Provisional Government of twelve, who took the place of the Council of State, and assumed control of the country. Then the Emperor set out to return to Petrograd, but his train was stopped, and he was compelled to sign a deed of abdication. The peasants, at least, had always believed that their "Little Father," the Tsar, loved them, and was only prevented from bettering their condition by the opposition or disobedience of his officials; now they had lost all faith in him. The best soldiers had by now fallen, and all were exhausted by the terrible hardships

of the war; demagogues were spreading rumours that the people were made to bear these for the benefit of the officials, capitalists, and landowners, who were refusing to make peace when the Germans offered it. The army, indeed, was the people, now with arms in their hands; the officers were their old oppressors, now in uniform. Freedom was the cry of all; with the abdication of the Tsar freedom seemed to have dawned. But freedom in the army was taken to mean that there must be no discipline, no orders given except by a committee of soldiers, all anxious for peace at any cost. The Russian army melted away, with the Germans still on Russian soil; the soldiers killed their officers, and returned to their homes, hoping to seize the land. But this was not enough. In the name of freedom the prisons were opened, and all the laws protecting life, property, and morality were overthrown. The Bolsheviks gained the upper hand. The Emperor was killed.

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